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EDAW

ENVISION MARIETTA

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

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DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Livable Centers Initiative

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sections

Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
Existing Conditions	7
Public Participation	72
Recommendations	116
Implementation	193

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Maps

Following page:

Study Area	1
Community Resources	8
Existing Land Use	10
Future Land Use	10
Neighborhoods	14
Zoning	23
Demographic Analysis	33
Congested Streets	50
Transit Routes	52
Proposed Trail Routes	56
Opportunities and Constraints	71
Site Analysis	71
Downtown Master Plan	192

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Existing Conditions Report



The existing conditions report organizes findings into five resource sections: land use, demographics, housing, transportation, and economic development.

The study area has a strong historic character, but there are pockets of land use incompatibility and deterioration along strip corridors. These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused action on in-fill redevelopment and higher residential density uses in the core; improved connectivity; and guidelines to reinforce desired development character.

The central city has mix of people from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and a disproportionate number of the city's older and poorer residents. These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused policy action on providing transportation options, readily accessible services, and affordable housing to study area residents and encouraging continued diversity.

Central Marietta offers an eclectic mix of homes. There are, however, pockets of physical deterioration and a lack of attractive mid-scale housing in the study area. These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused policy action on stimulating reinvestment and property maintenance; encouraging a variety of alternative housing choices in downtown; and having higher density residential land uses in the core.

Central Marietta provides a grid layout, internal connectivity, and existing transportation infrastructure. However, major facilities in the study area are highly congested. The strengths and weaknesses suggest opportunities for focused policy action on enhanced transit connections; improved pedestrian and bicycle access to the study area; and enhanced pedestrian-friendly connections, including reduction in the auto-orientation of major corridors and better access around the Square.

The study area is geographically near the economic core of the fast-growing Atlanta region and offers the attractive amenity of a small-town feel. Despite this locational advantage, Marietta's development activity lags behinds that of surrounding areas. The central city lies between the two emerging, suburban activity centers—Cumberland/Galleria and Town Center. Deteriorated housing stock, distressed gateways, land use incompatibilities, and some obsolete or vacant commercial stock adversely affect development prospects in the downtown. The area is also built-out, which requires more challenging in-fill activity.

These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused action on a more stream-lined, efficient development process for in-fill activity; possible economic incentives to increase investment interest; increasing the potential customer base through improved housing; and an enhanced business marketing strategy.

Public Participation and Visioning

Based on workshops, visioning exercises, and stakeholder interviews, the public envisions Marietta and its downtown as:

- A place that creates a people-friendly environment and an inviting small town feel;

- A place that forms a rich and unique historic tradition that is preserved through rehabilitation and promoted through compatible design;
- A place that protects human-scale and a pedestrian-friendly environment;
- A place that offers well-maintained houses in a wide variety of styles and prices;
- A place where neighborhoods are free of traffic;
- A place that offers big trees, green space, parks, paths, and trails;
- A place with lively streets that have both shopping and housing;
- A place with landscaped streets that have sidewalks, and are free of signs and utilities;
- A place with diverse entertainment and shopping options;
- A place where people can shop near their homes for everyday household needs;
- A place where people have convenient, safe, and flexible transportation options;
- A community that is culturally diverse and welcomes people of all backgrounds.

Recommendations

Based on exiting conditions analysis and public input, the recommendations section focuses on the central theme of recreating a community of neighborhoods and businesses that reflect the cherished qualities of the town Square—historic character and traditional design, human-scale, open spaces, and a pedestrian feel.

Recommended strategies include:

- efforts to streetscape major corridors in the study area;
- pedestrian-friendly design of new commercial development along corridors;
- the use of gateways to designate special areas of the central city;
- new zoning regulations to promote mixed use and more compact development;
- reductions in required on-site parking;
- the concentration of residential density and commercial uses at activity centers;
- the promotion of more active spaces near the Square;
- flexible residential zoning to encourage a wider variety of housing types;
- enhanced transportation links between activity centers and neighborhoods;
- use of design to eliminate land use incompatibilities in viable neighborhoods;

- the addition of green spaces;
- an emphasis on increased home ownership;
- strengthened code enforcement;
- the inclusion of minority residents through more accessible services;
- the consolidation of economic development authority for the downtown;
- the use of volunteer committees to assist with plan implementation;
- the use of local economic incentives to attract new investment

OVERALL INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, the Atlanta region has experienced explosive increases in population and employment. But the unmanaged, scattered development associated with rapid growth threatens to curb the region's economic vitality.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) approved \$5 million over five years to fund Livable Center/Town Center Investment Policy Studies in local jurisdictions. The studies are part of an emerging regional effort to combat sprawl, traffic congestion, and declining air quality. The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) encourages development and mixed uses in those areas of metropolitan Atlanta with existing public facilities and services (designated as activity centers); promotes integrated local land use and transportation decisions; supports balanced travel choices; seeks to preserve local historic character; highlights Smart Growth planning activities, which recognize the connection between development and quality of life; and strengthens local community participation in planning efforts. As part of the LCI, the ARC will also allocate \$350 million over the next 5 years to fund priority transportation/land use improvement projects identified through the local study process.

The ARC designated the City of Marietta as a regional activity center and awarded funds for the completion of an LCI Master Plan covering the city's downtown core. The consultant team assisted the City of Marietta in preparing a plan for the central business area and its surrounding neighborhoods. The red boundary on the study area map shows the plan's geographic focus. Recognizing its role as a key element in the community-

wide planning process, the plan also addresses broader transportation, development, and land use issues affecting the city as a whole.

Among the issues reviewed in the LCI Master Plan are:

- the appropriate mix of land uses for future growth;
- measures to reduce demand for auto travel;
- access to diverse transportation choices, including walking, transit, and bicycling;
- connections between neighborhoods and other activity centers;
- community participation in local decision-making;
- public and private investment in development;
- urban design;
- economic development opportunities; and
- diversity of housing options.

The master plan is intended to:

- identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the study area;
- develop a common vision for the city;
- build upon the goals of the City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan;
- develop specific policy recommendations;
- identify specific implementation strategies and organizational support structures;
- position the city for future improvement project funding; and
- provide a framework for the successful, ongoing implementation of desired land use and transportation goals.

We have developed a three-phase planning process to achieve these goals.

Phase I Research and Data Analysis

Phase II Vision and Plan Development

Phase III Strategies and Organizational Structure Development

Under the first phase, we summarized existing conditions in the study area using city plans, reports, and data. We reviewed available documents with a particular emphasis on land use, transportation, housing, and economic development issues. We also conducted targeted one-on-one interviews with community leaders to define their concerns about the city and establish stakeholder expectations of the plan. The existing conditions review analyzes trends, assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the study area, and identifies opportunities to improve the quality of life.

Under the second phase, we have helped to capture public vision through community workshops, including a visual preference survey and improvement priority questionnaire. Public input gathered at the workshops guides the mission statement and the goals and objectives presented in the master plan.

The findings from Phases I and II provide a general framework for improved land use, transportation, and development decisions in the central city business area and its neighborhoods.

Phase III of the process identifies specific actions, including measurable objectives, responsible parties, schedule, and budget to support the successful, on-going implementation of recommended strategies.

The Envision Marietta Downtown Master Plan is organized into the following sections:

1. Existing Conditions Report
2. Public Participation and Visioning
3. Policy Recommendations
4. Plan Implementation

Overall, the master plan documents the strategic planning process, sets priorities for public and private actions, and serves as a practical reference guide during future plan implementation.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Historically, cities serve as the center of cultural, social, and economic life. Since World War II, however, people, money, and jobs have fled established central city communities for newer, suburban locations. Continued growth in scattered, low-density patterns—known as sprawl—produces many unexpected and negative consequences, including:

- Increasing traffic congestion
- Worsening air quality
- Loss of open space

- Inefficient use of public resources and existing infrastructure
- Loss of community
- Physical isolation of groups in central city areas

These effects are evident as metropolitan Atlanta struggles with poor air quality, long commutes, strained infrastructure, and the loss of trees and green space. Sprawl diminishes the quality of life for all people in the region and, if unmanaged, threatens opportunities for sustained growth and future prosperity.

The local Marietta community also reflects many of the trends unfolding throughout the region and across the nation. In recent years, the City of Marietta has expanded mostly through the annexation of peripheral areas. With growth forces directed toward outlying areas, central Marietta suffers from declines in the physical condition of the housing and building stock and reduced interest in business investment and tourism. There is a strong connection between the health of a city's core and its outlying areas. Distressed conditions at the center directly affect the city's ability to provide quality schools, relieve traffic congestion, control taxes, and offer economic opportunity for all residents.

The purpose of the Envision Marietta Downtown Master Plan is not to limit growth in outlying suburban areas. The health of any city requires continued development of new houses, stores, offices, and industry. The emphasis of the master plan is to restore balance to the development process and ensure the viability of the central business area and nearby neighborhoods.

A variety of regional and national trends in development, such as the reuse of old commercial buildings, mixed use developments, and traditional neighborhood design, supports the revitalization of once neglected central city areas.

People have rediscovered the appeal along with the practical advantages of the traditional downtown. Central cities and older city neighborhoods provide a unique and often historical sense of place that is distinct from suburban development. Many suburbs currently struggle to recreate the physical characteristics, such as sidewalks, interconnected streets, public spaces, and beautiful architecture that many central Marietta neighborhoods already possess. Central cities offer a comparatively efficient place to invest because of the ready availability of large infrastructure systems, such as roads, water, and sewer. Also, the diverse mix of people and businesses, architectural styles, parks, and cultural amenities—all within proximity of one another—generates interest and vitality. The master plan seeks to build on these inherent advantages of the central city study area.

Most of central Marietta is built and its general land uses are in place. The question is whether these uses will be viable, attractive, and healthy. The challenge for both public and private leaders is to guide the central city so that the private market for existing buildings and neighborhoods becomes stronger and people choose to reinvest in the area with homes, jobs, and purchases.

Maintaining a livable urban environment is essential for the City of Marietta's health and the region's overall quality of life. The central city must remain competitive and attract a share of residents, businesses, and institutions.

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

An assessment of existing conditions helps a community to understand both its current position and the trends shaping its future direction. A thorough baseline evaluation brings significant issues to the attention of policymakers and the public, providing a more informed basis for effective decision-making and sustained community involvement.

This report summarizes existing conditions in the study area using a review of available city reports and documents combined with site visits, interviews with community representatives and government service providers, and data collection from secondary information sources. The inventory organizes findings into five resource sections:

1. Land Use
2. Demographics
3. Housing
4. Transportation
5. Economic Development

Each resource section characterizes the study area, reflects previous planning efforts and goals, identifies major issues and trends, and defines strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for new policy action.

LAND USE

Land uses form the basic building blocks of a community. Land patterns are interconnected with transportation and movement, commercial growth, neighborhood character, safety, infrastructure efficiency, and aesthetics. As a result, improvements in quality of life must be fundamentally based on coordinated and comprehensive land use decisions.

General Land Use Patterns

Overall, the City of Marietta is approximately 20 square miles or 11,500 acres. The city's land area has grown in recent years through the annexation of contiguous parcels on the periphery. Currently, half of the city's overall land use is residential. Approximately 20 percent of land is in commercial use, while 15 percent has industrial activity.

The geographic area shown in the study area map is approximately 1,700 acres or 15 percent of the city's total land area. The study area has three basic land use components:

- the central business district core;
- residential neighborhoods; and
- linear corridors of commercial activities.

The sections below characterize these major land use groupings. The study area also features open space and parks, as well as institutional activities. The community resources map shows these publicly oriented land uses.

The table below shows existing land use by acre. The table also identifies the major land use categories found in the study area, along with their corresponding zoning classifications and applicable development guidelines

The table also shows future land uses in the study area by acre. A comparison between existing and future classifications indicates a substantial percentage increase in the small inventory of low density residential uses in the study area. Acreage designated as neighborhood activity center and open space increases moderately. No high density residential land use exists under current or future conditions in the study area.

Existing and Future Land Uses in Study Area

Land Use Category	Existing in Acres	Future in Acres	% Change
Community Activity Center	503	489	-3%
Central Business District	101	96	-5%
Community Service/Institutional	124	125	1%
Industrial Compatible Area	28	28	-1%
Low Density Residential	1	29	2807%
Medium Density Residential	528	532	1%
Neighborhood Activity Center	9	16	76%
Open Space/Recreation	51	80	58%
Very Low Density Residential	16	0	-100%

Land Use Category	Existing in Acres	Future in Acres	% Change
Other*	356	323	-9%
Total	1,717	1,717	

*Note: the Other category includes right-of-way and parcels that have not been coded with a land use designation.

Reflecting the built-out status of the study area, most of the land uses remain unchanged from existing to future designations. The city center offers limited amounts of vacant land for development. Currently, the only large developable tract of vacant land in the study area is an eight-acre area along Lake Dodd Boulevard near Cobb Parkway. A second very underused 1.5-acre parcel lies along Roswell Street and Coryell Street, but soil conditions limit development potential. Several scattered commercially zoned properties are also available.

As would be expected of a city center, the study area's development patterns are more compact than the city overall. According to the 1990 census, the study area has 4.1 persons per acre, while the city's persons per acre figure is 3.8.

Central Business District

The central business district (CBD) and town square form the core of the study area. The CBD consists mainly of retail, office, and public land uses, including Cobb County and City of Marietta government buildings to the east and south of the square. Uses are generally of low to moderate density with many buildings of late nineteenth century architectural design. The square offers a variety of stable specialty retail and boutique shops, as well as converted office space in historic commercial/warehouse buildings.

Glover Park, the town square, provides an attractive collective space with play facilities and street furniture. Government activities generate considerable daytime activity on the square. With the lack of diverse entertainment and shopping alternatives and new housing opportunities in the area activity subsides at night.

Land Use Classifications and Development Guidelines

Land Use Category	Purpose	Compatible Zoning Categories	Development Guidelines*
Community Activity Center	Provides retail/services for neighborhoods or communities	General Commercial Office/Institutional Planned Developments	Low to medium density .75 FAR for office .25 FAR for retail Near intersections Nodal development

Land Use Category	Purpose	Compatible Zoning Categories	Development Guidelines*
Central Business District	Preserves character of downtown	Central Business District General Commercial Office/Institutional Residential High Rise	Diverse development Compatible with use and appearance of existing CBD Encourages residential uses
Community Service/ Institutional	Provides governmental and institutional land uses	Office/Institutional Office Institutional Transitional	Oriented toward public services FAR of less than 1
Industrial Compatible Area	Provides light industrial, office and warehouse uses	Office/Institutional Light Industrial Planned Developments	Office limited to FAR of .75 Height limit of 4 stories Access to regional transportation system
Low Density Residential	Low density housing of 3 dwelling units per acre or less	RA R-30 R-20 R-15	Higher densities near adequate facilities New uses that protect character of the area

Land Use Category	Purpose	Compatible Zoning Categories	Development Guidelines*
Medium Density Residential	Moderate density housing of up to 6 dwelling units per acre	R-30 R-20 R-15 R-10 RMD FST-6	Encourage higher densities near adequate facilities Encourages new uses that protect character of the area
Neighborhood Activity Center	Provides for immediate needs of neighborhoods	Neighborhood Shopping Office Institutional Transitional	Low intensity .75 FAR for office .25 FAR for retail
Open Space/Rec	Public uses of land		Regional, community and neighborhood facilities should be scaled appropriately

*Note: FAR – Floor Area Ratio = the floor area of a building on a lot divided by the lot area

The Cherokee and Church corridors north of the square consist mainly of well preserved structures, which maintain the square's design character. The main corridors leading south from the square, particularly along Atlanta Street and Waddell Street, have a mix of county buildings and commercial activity with a less historically compatible character.

Residential Areas

There are eight major clusters of residential neighborhoods in the study area:

1. the Austin neighborhood (22 on map) bounded by Cobb Parkway to the east, North Marietta Parkway to the north, Austin Avenue to the west, and Washington Avenue to the south.
2. the Fort Hill/Roosevelt neighborhood (33 on map) bounded by North Fairground Street to the east, North Marietta Parkway to the north, Washington Avenue to the south, and Cole Street to the west.
3. The southern portion of the Forest Hills neighborhood (31 on map) bounded by North Marietta Parkway to the north, East Park Square to the west, Forest Avenue to the south, and Hunt Street to the east.
4. the Polk neighborhood (30 on map), with that portion of its residential areas roughly bounded by Locust Street to the east, Holland Street to the north, Winn Street to the west, and Polk Avenue to the south.
5. the Whitlock neighborhood (29 on map), with that portion of its residential areas roughly bounded by Whitlock Avenue to the north, Northcutt Street to the west, and Griggs Street to the south.
6. the Dixie neighborhood (11 on map) bounded by Hedges Street to the north, Powder Springs Road to the west, Glover Street to the south, and Manget Street to the east.
7. the Fraiser neighborhood (24 on map) bounded by Roswell Street to the north, Alexander Street to the west, South Marietta Parkway to the south, and South Fairground Street to the east.

8. the Victory neighborhood (23 on map) bounded by Aviation Road to the east, Roswell Street to the north, Merritt Street to the west, and South Marietta Parkway to the south.

Overall, neighborhoods have mainly single-family medium density housing. Most of the housing stock was built in the 1940s and 1950s. Conditions vary from well-maintained and historically preserved structures to concentrated areas of sub-standard units.

The Austin neighborhood consists of modest, but relatively stable housing, including a new cul-de-sac residential development at Beggs Court. A pocket of distressed single-family housing lies along Richard Street near the Boston Homes housing project. Commercial and institutional activities mix with residential uses, particularly along Lawrence Street and Washington Avenue east of Fairground Street. In general, this portion of the study area is vulnerable to the intrusion of commercial activity from the Cobb Parkway and Roswell Street corridors. Commercial uses frequently abut or leapfrog residences.

The Fort Hill/Roosevelt neighborhood includes a pocket of deteriorated housing by Rigby, Fort, and Lake Streets. Fort Hill Homes lies along Cole Street to the west of this distressed area. Other residential streets in the neighborhood are more stable, including rehabilitated and newly constructed single-family residences along Roosevelt Circle. Roosevelt Circle and Lemon Street also feature several community-oriented institutional uses, such as a library, recreation facilities, and health services. The Lawrence Street and Washington Avenue corridors in this area are in transitional professional office use and restored structures blend compatibly with surroundings.

The Forest Hills neighborhood, which is to the west of the Fort Hill/Roosevelt area, consists of preserved historic residences from the 1920s. This attractive area is well buffered from surrounding commercial and institutional uses and features pedestrian scale amenities, such as street lighting and maintained sidewalks.

The Polk neighborhood, which juts to the northwest of the study area includes many well-preserved historic residences with a pocket of modest, gentrifying homes along Moon Street. The Northwest Marietta Historic District overlays part of this neighborhood. Along with historic structures, the Marietta High School complex along Winn Street anchors this stable and attractive neighborhood.

The Whitlock neighborhood portion of the study area also features well-maintained homes with distinct historic character, particularly along McDonald Street. The Whitlock Historic District overlays this area. Along with historic structures, a cluster of contemporary, upscale homes on a cul-de-sac street pattern lies along Whitlock Square. Areas to the east and south of upscale homes contain a mixture of uses including Henderson Arms, an elderly public housing high-rise, the Louise Burford Henry Park and office transitional activities along Crescent Circle. The Johnny Walker public homes along Cora Court and Henry Street and the single-family homes that line Griggs Street to the south of this neighborhood are distressed.

The most distressed residential pocket in the study area is the western portion of the Dixie neighborhood, which consists of renter-occupied, World War Two era housing. The Existing Land Use Map identifies this area as a Commercial Activity Center. Commercial activities currently encroach on residential streets. Deteriorated homes concentrate along stretches of Hedges Street, West Dixie Street, Welch Street and Gramling Street. Several streets to the south, such as Lovejoy and Bolan, contain a small cluster of better maintained, ranch-style housing from the 1960s and 1970s.

Beautifully restored historic structures near Atlanta and Fraiser Streets stabilize the Dixie neighborhood east of West Atlanta Street. The area has some distressed housing along Kings Court and Hawkins and Butler Streets. Though primarily residential in current use, the Future Land Use Map designates the area as Industrial Compatible and zoning classifies the area for Light Industrial activity. Industrial compatible land uses encroach on this deteriorated pocket. Manget and Glover Streets offer a relatively stable

mixture of institutional and commercial activities, including the Cobb County School Annex and the Larry Bell Park facilities.

The Fraiser neighborhood has an emerging office transitional and commercial character along Waterman Street and South Avenue. Several primarily residential streets off of Roswell Street, including Lakewood Drive and Summit Avenue, retain a stable housing stock. In general, housing quality tends to deteriorate in the eastern portion of this neighborhood. Fraiser Street and Waterman Street have some moderately distressed duplexes and small multi-family buildings near their intersection with Manget Street.

Streets east of Fairground Street in the Victory neighborhood offer single-family housing, ranging from stable to moderately distressed. Housing stock remains the most viable in the area near the Victory Park area. In general, intense commercial activity along South Marietta Parkway and the Marietta Trade Center along Cobb Parkway compromises neighborhood quality in areas east of Aviation Road. Affected residential pockets include the Branson Homes along Aviation Road and Lake Drive, duplexes and multi-family complexes on Dodd Street, and small, deteriorated single-family housing along Lockheed Avenue, Bell Street, and Martin Court.

Linear Corridors

Five major corridors run through the study area:

- Marietta Parkway (the Loop)
- Powder Springs Road
- Roswell Street
- Fairground Street

- Cobb Parkway

The Loop forms an outer boundary for most of the study area. By encircling the central city, this heavily traveled corridor limits pedestrian and bicycle movement from neighborhoods into the downtown core. The parkway contains some residential uses as the northern part of the Loop turns west of Cobb Parkway. Strip commercial activities emerge in the areas to the west of the CBD and as the south Loop returns to Cobb Parkway.

Powder Springs Road forms part of the southern boundary of the study area. To the north, Powder Springs merges with the strip commercial activity of the Loop. Brumby Hall and the Marietta Conference Center are slightly south across from the city cemetery. South of Gramling Street, Powder Springs then deteriorates rapidly to marginal strip development and pockets of distressed housing. The abrupt transition of land uses along this heavily-traveled corridor isolates two of the city's major historic and cultural amenities.

Roswell Street bisects the study area and serves as the major east-west entry corridor into the square. Intensity on Roswell increases as the corridor approaches Cobb Parkway. This stretch of Roswell east of Fairground Street consists of single commercial uses on small lots with extensive curb cuts and front-lot parking. Commercial activity along the strip continues to encroach on surrounding neighborhoods.

The Roswell corridor is fairly narrow, offering a compact framework for pedestrian-oriented development. Traffic congestion, however, dominates this strip and overwhelms the street scale. The cluttered signs, minimal landscaping, and marginal business activity also reduce the aesthetic appeal of this key city gateway. Strip development on Roswell Street tapers off west of Fairground Street. The Cobb County library and government buildings anchor this more appealingly landscaped portion of the corridor.

The Fairground Street corridor bisects the study area north-south. This mostly commercial corridor increases in development intensity south of Lawrence Street, merging with Roswell Street's heavy, strip development.

Cobb Parkway, which forms the eastern boundary of the central city area, is a high volume artery of intense commercial activity, linking the city to Cumberland-Galleria to the south and Town Center Mall to the north. This corridor has fast-food establishments, big box retail, and several major traffic generators, such as White Water Park and the Marietta Trade Center. Large, cluttered signs, minimal landscaping, and concrete medians reduce the aesthetic character of the strip. Additionally, the corridor offers no pedestrian amenities.

Overall, commercial uses vary widely in quality with stretches of marginal, declining business activity along the corridors. The study area offers an unbalanced mix of commercial uses, including a disproportionate number of auto-related services. Little pedestrian accessible commercial activity near neighborhoods meets the daily needs of study area households.

Historic Resources

Overall, the study area has 3,825 existing structures. Of the total structures in the study area, 143 buildings were built between 1800 and 1899, and 1,026 structures were built between 1900 and 1980. Year-built data are unavailable for the remaining 2,656 buildings in the study area.

There are six districts in and around the study area that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Atlanta Street/Fraiser Street, Church Street/Cherokee Street, Downtown Marietta, Northwest Marietta, Washington Avenue, Whitlock Avenue. The area also has two nationally registered historic sites: the Zion Baptist Church on Haynes Street and Brumby Hall on Powder Springs Road.

Central Marietta contains many excellent examples of nineteenth century and early twentieth century architecture, giving the area its distinct historic character. According to data from a 1993 historical survey conducted in the city, the study area's architectural styles include: Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Greek Revival, Folk Victorian, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Art Deco, Beaux Arts, Dutch Colonial Revival, Victorian, Neo-Classical Revival, High Victorian Gothic, Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Federal, and Stripped Classical.

The Marietta Historic Board of Review, which is under the Marietta Downtown Development Authority, oversees proposed new construction and the alteration of existing structures in the downtown CBD. The review process is supposed to ensure the visual compatibility of development with related structures based on the following criteria:

- Building height
- Relationship of the building width to the height of the front elevation
- Width of the windows in a building to the height of the windows
- Relationship of solids to voids in the front facade of a building
- Relationship of buildings to open space around adjoining buildings
- Relationship of entrances and porch projections to the sidewalks of a building
- Relationship of the materials, texture and color of the building facade
- Roof shape of a building
- Building appurtenances such as walls, wrought iron fences, evergreen landscape masses, building facades must, if necessary, form cohesive walls of enclosure along a street

- Size of a building, the mass of a building in relation to open spaces, and the windows, door openings, porches and balconies
- Directional building character, including vertical, horizontal or non-directional character

The Marietta Historic Board of Review also sets colors and design guidelines for signs within the CBD.

The Historic Board consists of local elected officials and members of the Downtown Marietta Development Authority, but has no professional preservationist on staff. The Historic Board conducts its oversight activities independently of the City of Marietta government. As part of the rezoning/development process, a proposal must receive majority approval from Board members before an application is submitted to the city for further action.

In addition to the visual compatibility guidelines, the city council has recently set a maximum building height of 85 feet for construction in the CBD. The council has also revised the Historic Board's procedures, expanding the time frame for application review to allow for increased city government input.

Development Regulations

Development in the study area is subject to the city zoning ordinance, which includes tree protection, landscaping requirements, and sign regulation, the comprehensive development code, and CDB visual compatibility guidelines.

In addition to zoning and development regulations, four redevelopment districts overlay the study area:

- A primarily residential area, bounded by Lawrence, Cole, Lemon and Rigby Streets, with emphasis on rehabilitating existing housing quality.

- An area south of the central business district along Waterman and Alexander Streets, intended to promote higher quality and compatibility of emerging commercial activity.
- An area to the west of North Marietta Parkway along Winn Street
- An area west of North Marietta Parkway along Trammel and Reynolds Streets

The overlay designates transitional areas with structures that could be converted to uses more compatible with existing development. Along with the development guidelines of the base land use category, redevelopment overlays recommend a minimum tract size of five acres and encourage nodal development. For tracts of less than five acres, the city considers the potential for future interparcel access, building orientation, and development compatibility with surrounding uses. The redevelopment overlays provide no special economic incentives for investment and there has been relatively little new development activity in these areas.

Zoning Regulations

The table shows the zoning categories in the study area by acre. The accompanying table shows the applicable development standards of major classifications. Approximately 45 percent of the study area is zoned for residential use. The most common category is single-family residential with a density of four dwelling units per acre. The zoning map designates about one-quarter of the central city for commercial activity.

The city uses a fairly conventional zoning scheme. Aside from the historic district compatibility criteria, there are no specific design guidelines. Only the CBD and Mixed Use Development zoning classifications, which equal about 3 percent of the study area, permit mixed use activity. Front setbacks for

commercial uses, particularly along arterial and collector streets, are consistent with more auto-oriented development. Additionally, current sign regulations, which are generally permissive, allow for strip development.

Zoning Classifications in Study Area

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total Land
Central Business District	44	3%
Community Retail Commercial	334	19%
Light Industrial	52	3%
Low Rise Office	3	0.2%
Mixed Use Development	3	0.2%
Neighborhood Retail Commercial	13	1%
Office High Rise	2	0.1%
Office Institutional	199	12%
Office Institution Transition	9	1%
Planned Residential Development – Multi Family	49	3%
Planned Residential Development –Single Family	8	0.5%
Single-Family Residential (2 units/acre)	2	0.1%
Single-Family Residential (3 units/acre)	22	1%
Single-Family Residential (4 units/acre)	497	29%
Single-Family Residential - Attached	39	2%
Residential High Rise	2	0.1%
Multi-Family Residential (10 units/acre)	6	0.4%

Zoning Category	Acres	% of Total Land
Multi-Family Residential (12 units/acre)	36	2%
Multi-Family Residential (8 units/acre)	73	4%
Other*	321	19%

Note: The Other category includes right-of-way and parcels not designated with a zoning classification

The city ordinance, however, offers several incentives for more pedestrian-friendly design. The ordinance reduces the required front yard set back by 50 percent if a use provides exclusive rear lot parking. Developments receive a bonus floor area of 350 square feet for each provided parking space that is part of on-site underground parking or deck parking. Uses that retrofit an existing site to create pedestrian access and interparcel connections may receive a 10 percent reduction in required parking. The ordinance also grants a 10 percent reduction in required parking to uses with a front door within 250 feet of a public transit stop.

The rezoning process in the City of Marietta typically takes six to eight weeks. Rezoning activity in the study area is minimal with a primary focus on residential transition to professional office space. Current zoning provisions hamper redevelopment activity in commercially zoned areas with existing residential uses. The ordinance requires zoning variances because proposed businesses are on substandard residential lots.

Major Zoning Categories and Development Requirements

Zoning Category	Purpose	Development Regulations
Central Business District	Foster proximity and intensive development	Marietta Historic Board of Review compatibility guidelines
Community Retail Commercial	Retail and personal services for adjacent neighborhoods	<p>Minimum lot size = 20,000 sf</p> <p>FAR = .50</p> <p>Maximum impervious surface = 80%</p> <p>Front setbacks = 35 to 40 feet</p> <p>Side setbacks = 15 to 25 feet</p> <p>Rear setback = 35 feet</p>
Office Institutional	Mid-sized office development and institutional activities	<p>Minimum lot size = 20,000 sf</p> <p>FAR = .75</p> <p>Maximum impervious surface = 80%</p> <p>Front setbacks = 30 to 50 feet</p> <p>Side setbacks = 15 to 25 feet</p> <p>Rear setback = 35 feet</p>

Zoning Category	Purpose	Development Regulations
S-F Residential (4 units/acre)	Low density single-family detached housing	Minimum lot size = 7,500 sf Minimum floor area = 1,200 sf Maximum impervious surface = 50% Front setbacks = 25 to 35 feet Side setbacks = 10 to 25 feet Rear setback = 30 feet

Notes:

sf = square feet

FAR – Floor Area Ratio = the floor area of a building on a lot divided by the lot area

Development Activity in Study Area

Development review, which is conducted by the Public Works Department with comment from other city departments, generally takes four to six weeks. Though most of the study area is stagnant, the central city shows several pockets of redevelopment activity or interest in.

Developers propose a six-story mixed-use development with 60,000 square feet of office and retail space, 300 market-rate condominium units, and parking for the Denmead-Mill Streets area along North Marietta Parkway. A second major focus of activity lies to the southwest of the Mill Street site along the Loop, including tentative plans to redevelop the Johnny Walker

Homes property and the deteriorated residential area near Crescent Circle and Griggs Street.

The triangular-shaped distressed residential area south of the city cemetery between Powder Springs Road and West Atlanta Street is also a main target of future redevelopment efforts. The city's development priorities recommend a conversion of this area to its designated commercial use, thereby connecting the Marietta Conference Center on the east to an eventually widened West Atlanta Street.

Roswell Street is another critical redevelopment priority. The congested strip corridor is currently the scene of sporadic redevelopment activity with a new office development and rehabilitated office space at Doran Avenue, a new office to be constructed at Covington Avenue, and a rehabilitated Life College annex at Key Drive.

Also, an area just north of the study boundary, which includes North Session Street, Radium Street and Roselane Street, has seen the conversion of existing commercial structures into loft spaces, and the construction of new in-fill attached single-family housing, and an office park. This attractive area features pedestrian-oriented scale and amenities, which are compatible with the design fabric of the historic areas. The area to the east of this activity also has a new upscale, gated community along Cherokee Street in proximity of the public Lyman Homes.

Land Use Goals

Land use goals set by the City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan discourage conventional strip land use patterns by promoting nodal development with a commercial center surrounded by less intense uses. Policies also promote human scale, pedestrian-oriented development. Other goals encourage a mix of residential types to provide diverse housing choice, architectural design

compatible with surrounding development, the re-use and revitalization of underused commercial and industrial structures, and urban design guidelines.

The Comprehensive Plan also recommends a clear methodology to evaluate development proposals around the square and to protect historic resources consistent with private property rights.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

Overall, the study area has a strong sense of place, community identity, and historic character. Central city Marietta offers the development skeleton of an appealing traditional community- interconnected street patterns, narrow interior streets, sidewalks in many areas, small front setback in most neighborhoods, and a fine grain of land uses that mix freely. These physical characteristics can create the vibrancy and interest that is the hallmark of downtown living. A variety of institutional uses, including government buildings, churches, cultural, and historical attractions, and colleges and universities also anchor the study area, giving it stability and a ready base of downtown users.

There are several major land use challenges to the study area. First, there are pockets of incompatibility as areas transition from residential to more intense office or commercial activities. Second, there are gaps in the connectivity between centerpiece land uses, such as the Marietta Conference Center, and Brumby Hall along Powder Springs Road. Poor connectivity is also evident in the lack of pedestrian access to the square from neighborhoods to the west, north, and south. Heavy traffic along the Loop and pedestrian unfriendly crossings disconnect these neighborhoods from the downtown core. Third, the emergence of strip development along major gateways, such as Roswell Street, diminishes the area's aesthetics and depresses interest in business investment and growth. Fourth, there is an absence of high density

residential and flexible land use designations in the central city to support downtown living and pedestrian-friendly in-fill redevelopment.

These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused action on:

- Growth through in-fill and redevelopment opportunities in key areas, particularly along the Roswell Street corridor, the Powder Springs corridor, and the deteriorated West Dixie neighborhood.
- Establishing higher residential density uses and more flexible development regulations to promote pedestrian-friendly development at the study area core.
- Improved connectivity between land uses, especially around the square, centerpiece attractions, such as the Marietta Conference Center, Brumby Hall, and between neighborhoods.
- Clear articulation of future development goals for transitioning neighborhoods and policies that reinforce desired development character.
- Guidelines that preserve that fine pattern of mixed land uses, but also ensure that the uses are compatible, functional, and attractive.

The site imagery and opportunities and constraints analysis maps show key areas of strength and weakness in the study area.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics of a community, such as age, ethnicity, educational level, and income, serve as a practical indicator of an area's overall needs for housing, transportation, and community support. Demographic characteristics also infuse an area with its own sense of place, identity, and vitality. Improvements in the quality of life require that development decisions meet the needs of residents and also strongly encourage diversity and inclusiveness among all community members.

Population Profile

According to 2000 census data, the City of Marietta has over 58,000 people. The table below shows the most current data for the city population, age and race.

City of Marietta Population by Race and Age, 2000

	All Ages		18 and up	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	58,748	100	45,690	100
One race	57,192	97.4	44,566	97.8
White	33,185	56.5	27,337	60
Black or African American	17,330	29.5	12,228	26.8

	All Ages		18 and up	
American Indian and Alaska Native	188	0.3	136	0.3
Asian	1,744	3	1,363	3
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	51	0.1	40	0.1
Some other race	4,694	8	3,462	7.6
Two or more races	1,556	2.6	1,024	2.2
HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE				
Total population	58,748	100	45,590	100
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	9,947	16.9	7,312	16
Not Hispanic or Latino	48,801	83.1	38,278	84
One race	47,781	81.3	37,613	82.5
White	28,544	48.6	23,925	52.5
Black or African American	17,090	29.1	12,067	26.5
American Indian and Alaska Native	125	0.2	89	0.2
Asian	1,724	2.9	1,346	3
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	30	0.1	22	0

Some other race	268	0.5	164	0.4
Two or more races	1,020	1.7	665	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Currently, 2000 data are available only at the city level. For purposes of this comparison, which requires block group level data, the analyses below use an unadjusted city population of 44,129 from the 1990 census. Based on an analysis of block group census data, the study area has approximately 7,000 residents or 16 percent of the city's overall 1990 population.

As shown in the following table, 1990 data form a profile of the study area community that is generally poorer, less well-educated, and has more minorities than the city population as a whole. The disparity between central Marietta and Cobb County is even greater, suggesting that much of the Cobb area's wealth lies in the unincorporated county.

1990 Census Data Profile

	Cobb County	City of Marietta	Study Area
Population	447,745	44,129	7,008
Average HH size	2.61	2.22	2.35
Median HH Income	\$41,297	\$27,371	\$20,291
% of Population Below Poverty	5.6%	14%	34%
% of White/Non-White Population	88% / 12%	76% / 24%	59% / 41%
% with less than HS Diploma	9.1%	18%	45%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990

In addition to the 1990 census, this section uses updated CACI Marketing Systems Group demographic data for the three concentric rings shown in the demographic analysis map. The first ring is a one-mile radius from a selected center point of the study area. This ring approximates the characteristics of the study area. The second ring is a three mile radius, which includes the study area, as well as most portions of the city and parts of unincorporated Cobb County. The third ring is a five mile radius, encompassing the study area, all of the City of Marietta, and additional portions of the unincorporated county.

The table below compares the updated demographic characteristics of the three concentric areas. These data reinforce the conclusion that the central city has a larger percentage of poorer, older residents.

2000 Demographic Data Estimates in 1, 3, and 5 Mile Rings

	1 Mile Area	3 Mile Area	5 Mile Area
Population	9,713	70,033	185,563
Households	4,153	30,582	79,837
Average Household Size	2.31	2.23	2.30
Owner-occupied HHs	1,545	14,045	41,139
Renter-occupied HHs	2,608	16,537	38,698
Median Household Income	26,267	42,920	50,369
Average Household Income	35,417	54,435	62,270
Per Capita Income	15,413	23,953	26,965
% of HHs with income below \$15,000	31.1%	11.9%	7.9%

	1 Mile Area	3 Mile Area	5 Mile Area
Median Age	36.5	35.2	35.2
% of Population Above Age 65	19.4%	11.9%	9%

Source: CACI, December 2000

The study area has almost all of the Marietta Housing Authority's public housing units and, therefore, many of the city's most disadvantaged residents. The one-mile radius at the center of the city has a much larger percentage of households with annual incomes of less than \$15,000. Since four of the Marietta Housing Authority complexes are set aside for senior citizens, the study area also has pockets of elderly residents. As shown in the tables below, the study area has a disproportionate number of households with elderly and single mothers with children.

1990 Family Households with Children

	1 Mile Area	3 Mile Area	5 Mile Area
% Married Couple Family	49.1	65.4	71.3
% Male Householder	7.4	6.1	5.1
% Female Householder	43.5	28.5	23.5

Source: CACI, December 2000

Percent of 1990 Households with Children or Senior

	1 Mile Area	3 Mile Area	5 Mile Area
% W/children < 18	29.8	28.1	29.9
% W/person 65+	33.3	18.1	14.0
% W/householder 65+	31.0	16.5	12.3

Source: CACI, December 2000

In general, these comparisons suggest a continuing racial/income/age gap between the central city and the City of Marietta and Cobb County populations. The study area community is more likely to have demographic groups with particular needs for affordable housing opportunities, flexible transportation options, and convenient, close access to daily household services, such as grocery stores and drug stores. As shown in the table below, study area residents generally have less access to cars, which places an emphasis on study area walkability and transit connections.

1990 Means of Transportation to Work

	1 Mile Area	3 Mile Area	5 Mile Area
% Car, Truck, or Van: Drove Alone	62.4	81.2	82.3
% Car, Truck, or Van: Carpooled	20.3	11.7	11.4
% Public Transportation	4.1	1.3	1.2
% Other Means	12.2	4.0	2.8
% Worked at home	1.0	1.9	2.3

1990 Avg. Number of Vehicles Per Household 1.2 in area 1, 1.6 in area 2, and 1.7 in area 3.

Source: CACI, December 2000

Demographic Trends

Many of the central city neighborhoods are long-established minority communities or emerging ethnic enclaves. The Fort-Hill/Roosevelt neighborhood in the north-central portion of the central city is a predominately African-American area. The most dramatic demographic trend over the past decade is the increase in the number of city residents of Hispanic background. The following table shows the estimated and projected increases in the percentage of Hispanic residents between 1990 and 2005 in the three concentric rings shown in the demographic analysis map. The data reveal a 138 percent increase in the number of Hispanic residents in the one-mile area between 1990 and 2000. The projected increase between 2000 and 2005 in the one-mile area is 46 percent. Though people of Hispanic origin are slightly more concentrated in the central city area, the increase in this

group mirrors a similar demographic trend in the three-mile and five-mile rings.

Hispanic Residents in 1, 3, and 5 Mile Rings

Year	1 Mile Area		3 Mile Area		5 Mile Area	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1990	300	3.8%	1,809	3.2%	4,594	3.1%
2000	713	7.3%	4,506	6.4%	11,860	6.4%
2005	1,044	9.7%	6,757	8.7%	17,995	8.7%

Source: CACI, December 2000

There are two major pockets of Hispanic residents in the central city—a stable neighborhood in the Frasier Street area south of Roswell Street and a more transient population in the West Dixie neighborhood. Hispanic residents generally tend to be younger than other population groups in the central city and are not yet fully invested in the community. Many Hispanics live in Marietta because of family or friends, rather than neighborhood ties or an attachment to sense of place.

A second trend influencing the overall demographic characteristics of the study area is an increase in the number of Section 8 subsidy participants. According to the Marietta Housing Authority (MHA), as the City of Atlanta transforms its public housing program, recipients with portable rental housing vouchers seek housing assistance in the Marietta system. Many of the voucher recipients are life-long public housing residents with very limited life skills. Recognizing the need for improved delivery capabilities, the MHA is working to consolidate local programs into a one-stop center on South Marietta Parkway that provides access to health, housing, labor, state

Department of Family and Children Services, senior care, and transportation services.

Population Goals

The City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan does not establish any specific goals for the community population.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

The City of Marietta contains people of various ethnic and socioeconomic origins. While conventional suburban development tends to segregate people by income, and often by background, the central city permits a vibrant mix of people to live in proximity to one another. This inclusiveness creates the feel of a traditional, small southern town and an inviting community. The challenge associated with the study area's demographics is the delivery of adequate services to a disproportionate number of the city's needy. Marietta has established a family self-sufficiency program to promote improved life skills among economically disadvantaged residents.

These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused policy action on:

- Fostering development that meets the daily needs of poorer, older, less educated residents, such as convenient and flexible transportation options, readily accessible commercial uses and social services, and affordable housing.

- Encouraging the continued economic and ethnic diversity of the community through balanced housing choice and varied commercial services and community institutions.

The site imagery and opportunities and constraints analysis maps show key areas of strength and weakness in the study area.

HOUSING

Housing is one of the vital community assets that attracts residents and generates increased interest and investment in an area. Offering a diverse and affordable range of housing opportunities in the study area is essential to maintaining quality of life.

Existing Housing Stock

Overall, the City of Marietta has approximately 25,000 housing units. Over half are multi-family units, while about 44 percent of residences are single-family dwellings. The study area has approximately 2,950 households according to 1990 census data. The table below shows the number and percentage of renter-occupied units in the three concentric rings shown in the demographic analysis map. The one-mile area, which approximates the study area, continues to have a disproportionate number of renter-occupied units, though the projected percentage of rental units drops slightly by 2005.

Renter-Occupied Households in 1, 3, and 5 Mile Rings

Year	1 Mile Area		3 Mile Area		5 Mile Area	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1990	2,216	67%	14,178	58%	32,907	53%
2000	2,608	63%	16,537	54%	38,698	48%
2005	2,822	61%	17,883	52%	41,972	47%

Source: CACI, December 2000

While some neighborhoods feature historic nineteenth century and early twentieth century homes, most of the housing stock in the study area consists of modest cottages built in the 1940s and 1950s. Several neighborhoods also have contemporary 1960s and 1970s brick ranches. Housing conditions in the study area vary widely from well-preserved historic structures to pockets of very deteriorated rental housing.

Some distressed residential areas, such as East Dixie Street, have seen private rehabilitation activity. Multi-family zoning, however, has hampered improvements on lots in existing single-family use in these neighborhoods. Property owners could not add onto homes during renovation because they were non-conforming uses and, therefore, required a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals. After procedural revisions, redevelopment of single-family housing on multi-family zoned lots can now be authorized as an administrative decision.

The table below shows home values for owner-occupied dwellings within the one-, three-, and five-mile ring. The central city area has a significantly low average and median home price than other parts of the city and county.

2000 Total Specified Owner-Occupied Units

	1 Mile Area	3 Mile Area	5 Mile Area
% Under \$50,000	10.8	5.2	3.1
% \$50,000-\$99,999	44.3	31.8	34.0
% \$100,000-\$149,999	26.1	32.0	33.0
% \$150,000-\$199,999	7.1	15.4	16.6
% \$200,000-\$299,999	7.0	10.2	8.9
% \$300,000-\$399,999	1.9	2.6	2.7
% \$400,000-\$499,999	1.0	1.5	1.0
% \$500,000+	1.7	1.2	0.6
Average Home Value	\$121,762	\$141,723	\$136,869
Median Home Value	\$92,877	\$119,952	\$122,273
2000 Total Specified Owner-occupied Units	1,357	11,713	35,498

Source: CACI, December 2000

Public Housing and Housing Assistance

The Marietta Housing Authority (MHA) manages 954 public units in the nine complexes shown in the following table. The community resources map shows public housing units. All of the complexes, with the exception of the 125 Lyman Homes units, are in the study area. MHA sets aside about half of all units for elderly and disabled residents. The annual average income of

public housing residents is \$7,000. Currently, the wait list for public housing units is 384 people.

Though public housing units vary in age from 1942 to 1963, most structures are in good condition. The MHA allocated 24 million dollars for the rehabilitation of all complexes with the exception of Johnny Walker Homes. The authority has slated the Johnny Walker project for possible demolition, pending receipt of a federal Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) 6 grant that funds the removal of obsolete or unsafe public housing units.

The MHA Board is exploring opportunities to create additional housing opportunities by acquiring existing multi-family structures through bond financing and entering in a joint venture with a private partner to develop a mixed-use project with residential units.

The MHA also administers 993 Section 8 housing subsidies to assist low-income families in private housing market rentals. Most recipients use the subsidies for units in unincorporated Cobb County. Currently, 1,500 people are on the wait list for Section 8 subsidies. To promote increased homeownership, the MHA also participates in a 50 million dollar down payment assistance program for eligible homebuyers.

Marietta Housing Authority Public Housing Complexes

Complex	Number of Units
Clay Homes	132
Fort Hill Homes	120
Lyman Homes	125
Boston Homes	125
Branson Homes (elderly)	25
Johnny Walker Homes	125
Branson Homes Addition (elderly)	50
Dorsey Manor (elderly)	102
Henderson Arms (elderly)	150

The City of Marietta Community Development Department administers both Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to promote home ownership and Section 8 housing subsidies. The city offers approximately 600 Section 8 subsidies, most of which are used for rental units outside of City of Marietta limits.

To stimulate neighborhood revitalization, the city offers five-year forgivable housing rehabilitation loans to the elderly and other low-income families. The city also collaborates with agencies, such as Habitat for Humanity and Cobb Housing, Incorporated to rehabilitate existing homes and acquire property for new residential construction. As a result of earlier efforts, the Roosevelt Circle area in the north Fort Hill/Roosevelt neighborhood has new homes and several fully renovated residential structures. Habitat for

Humanity has identified five additional individual lots in the central city for future home construction.

The Community Development Department targets the following central city neighborhoods for revitalization funds:

- An area roughly bounded by Cole Street to the west, Lemon Street to the south, Roosevelt Circle to the East, and North Marietta Parkway to the north.
- An area bounded by Austin Avenue to the west, Washington Avenue to the south, and Howard Street to the east.
- An area bounded by Alexander Street to the west, South Marietta Parkway to the south, Aviation Road to the east, and Roswell Street to the north.

Housing Trends

Two major trends affect the overall availability and quality of housing stock in the study area. First, the lack of new multi-family units and rising land prices throughout the city have driven rental unit prices in the area about 10 percent higher than the metropolitan fair market value as determined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. This rental price escalation reduces the available supply of affordable units for Section 8 program participants. Upward pressure on land and housing prices has also squeezed the availability of attractive, mid-scale housing in the central city.

Secondly, widespread absentee land ownership currently contributes to deteriorated housing conditions in several sections of the city, particularly in the West Dixie neighborhood. This declining housing stock frequently

violates city codes, posing an enforcement burden and a physical blight on neighborhoods.

These two forces of rising prices and absentee land ownership combine to skew the supply of housing in the study area toward the extremes of price and quality. The area offers costly, up-scale, refurbished historic structures in well-maintained neighborhoods or lower-end, and often physically deteriorated, rental units along blighted streets.

Housing Goals

The City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan promotes affordable and diverse housing options, such as in-fill development, cluster housing, rental and mixed uses. Other land use goals support the maintenance of code inspection and enforcement activities and the protection of viable residential neighborhoods.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

Central Marietta has an eclectic mix of homes, ranging from restored historic structures and upscale single-family residences to small cottages and bungalows. Unlike its more homogenous suburban counterparts, the study area offers a variety of architectural styles and sizes for diverse lifestyles.

Pervasive absentee ownership often results in the physical deterioration of smaller and more affordable houses. As a result, certain neighborhoods continue to decline, consolidating pockets of poverty in the study area and limiting opportunities for reinvestment.

The lack of mid-scale housing in the study area also leaves the city ill-positioned to capture growing housing demand from groups with an interest in downtown living. In particular, the growing number of households without children, including aging Baby Boomers, and students and young professionals from nearby educational institutions provide a ready base of people drawn by alternatives to the conventional large single-family detached house.

These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused policy action on:

- Policies to stimulate and sustain reinvestment and property maintenance in distressed residential areas.
- Policies to promote increased home-ownership throughout the study area.
- Programs to encourage a variety of alternative housing choices in downtown, including single-family detached housing, rental units, mixed use projects, townhouses, and loft space.
- Higher density residential land use and zoning classifications in the core to promote increased downtown housing opportunities.

The site imagery and opportunities and constraints analysis maps show key areas of strength and weakness in the study area.

TRANSPORTATION

Following will be a brief synopsis of the existing conditions for each mode of transportation that affects the study area. Ongoing studies that may affect the study area will be summarized and the transportation/land use connections will be further analyzed. Lastly, some strengths, weaknesses and opportunities within the study area will be highlighted to assist in the future development of recommendations.

The City of Marietta coordinated with Cobb County in the preparation of the 1998 Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). As part of the process, the CTP analyzed the city's existing transportation conditions and future transportation needs based on population and employment growth projections. With these results, the CTP made improvement recommendations with intended implementation through a Cobb County sales tax referendum. Improvements were not instituted after failure of the referendum. However, Cobb County's CTP assessment of the City of Marietta's transportation conditions and needs provides a useful basis for a more detailed analysis of the Livable Center Initiative (LCI) study area.

The Cobb County CTP identified Marietta as one of three major activity centers within Cobb County, the other two being Cumberland/Galleria and Town Center. The City is considered to be a significant destination for jobs and commercial activity within the county. This positioning is due in part to the City of Marietta's development. Unlike other parts of the metropolitan area, Marietta developed independently of the City of Atlanta, which is reflected in the study area's grid street network and location of land uses. The Central Business District surrounds the town square, which is typical of traditional city development. More intense land uses, residential and commercial, radiate out from the CBD. These uses actually complement the many institutional and governmental facilities located in the area, since

Marietta is also the county seat. A good number of streets in the study area are narrow with mature street trees, creating a positive pedestrian experience. Moving away from the study area, it is evident that the surrounding Cobb County roadways developed radially, providing access to and from the Marietta square.

Roadways and Traffic Operations

Several major transportation corridors provide access to the City of Marietta. The major north/south corridors that affect the city and the study area are I-75, Cobb Parkway, Powder Springs Road and the SR 5 (Canton Road/Church-Cherokee one-way pair). Cobb Parkway and I-75 provide major connections with the City of Atlanta, as well as with several major east/west routes. The SR 5 corridor is especially important, providing access to the Kennestone Hospital area (just north of the study area) and to the CBD via the Cherokee Street/Church Street one-way pair. The major east/west routes are Roswell Road/Street (SR 120), which connects the Marietta Square to East Cobb and the Roswell area in Fulton County. Whitlock Avenue connects Marietta Square to Paulding County and other areas west. In addition, the SR 120 Loop/Marietta Parkway was built to alleviate east/west congestion of the Roswell Street corridor.

The table below shows additional information for these major corridors.

Major Corridor Characteristics

Road Name	# of Lanes (general)	Classification
SR 120 Loop	4	Major Arterial
Roswell Road/St.	4	Minor Arterial
Whitlock Avenue	2	Minor Arterial
Cobb Parkway (US 41)	4	Major Arterial
I-75	10	Principal Arterial
Powder Springs Road	4	Major Arterial
Canton Road (SR 5)	5	Major Arterial
Cherokee Street	2	Major Collector
Church Street	2	Major Collector

As evident from the above table, most of the roadways serving Marietta and the study area are classified as arterials. This classification indicates that they are designed to carry large number of vehicles and connect either major activity centers or other major thoroughfares. Moreover, several of these transportation corridors are State Routes and may operate as regional facilities, although according to the Cobb County CTP, 43 percent of the travel within Cobb County roadways is intra county.

In the 1997 Marietta Comprehensive Plan, the city used 1995 traffic counts to assess congestion levels along these major roadways. At that time, segments of each of these roadways had a volume to capacity ratio close to one or above. These measures meant that traffic volumes on these roads exceed their design capacity. Similarly, the 1999 Cobb County CTP process collected 1998 data along these same transportation corridors and, except for

portions of Cherokee Street and Church Street, the analysis deemed all segments to be inadequate in their operation. The available transportation information clearly indicates that roadways serving the study area are extremely congested and deficient (see map). The immediate impact of these congested corridors is the diversion of traffic into adjacent collector streets or local streets that were not designed to carry large number of vehicles.

Roadway Improvements

Recommended improvements identified for the City of Marietta in the 1999 Cobb County CTP could not be implemented to provide relief due to the failure of the sales tax referendum. However, the City's Public Works Department has completed a series of shoulder widenings and intersection improvements within the study area. These improvements have helped to alleviate congestion at major intersections along North Marietta Parkway (N Loop), South Marietta Parkway (S Loop) and Roswell Street. Public Works has also been successful in maintaining the existing streets in good condition using available sales tax and federal funding. However, without a continued source of funding, the condition of existing streets may deteriorate. The Department helps to improve traffic flow within Marietta by operating and maintaining an up to date traffic signal system. The City has its own Transportation Control Center (TCC) directly tied to the Georgia Department of Transportation Navigator system. The TCC is used to coordinated traffic signals throughout the City and change traffic signal timing to respond to congestion levels, traffic accidents, and other unforeseen events.

As shown in the tables below, the Atlanta Regional Commission's Transportation Improvement Program (2001-2003) and Year 2025 Regional Transportation Plan contain several roadway improvement projects in or around the City of Marietta that may help to alleviate congestion.

Short Term Roadway Improvement Projects (TIP 2001-2003)

Project	Improvement	Limits	Status
Roswell Road	Widen 4 to 6 lanes	120 Loop to Bridgegate Dr	Under Design
Atlanta Road	Widen 2 to 4 lanes	Austell Road to 120 Loop	Construct 2001

Long Term Roadway Improvement Projects (RTP 2025)

Project	Improvement	Limits	Status
Cobb Pkwy	Widen 4 to 8 lanes	Windy Hill to Terrell Mill	Construct 2015
Cobb Pkwy	Widen 4 to 8 lanes	S Loop to N Loop	Construct 2015
Cobb Pkwy	Widen 4 to 8 lanes	Terrell Mill to S Loop	Construct 2015
SR120 @ 120 Loop	Reconstruct Interchange	SR120 @ 120 Loop	Construct 2005

Transit

Cobb Community Transit (CCT) serves the City of Marietta and the study area. The CCT system is a federally subsidized transit program of fixed routes and express routes managed by Cobb County through a turnkey contract with a private contractor for operation and maintenance. The Transit Routes map depicts the CCT routes within the study area and shows the Marietta Transfer Center. Several bi-directional radial and circular routes from the transfer center connect Cobb County residential and municipal centers and the primary employment centers in Cumberland and Town Center to other Atlanta metro areas through MARTA system connections. CCT and MARTA have an existing reciprocal agreement that provides for ease of access between the two systems. The following table shows a sample of specific ridership numbers collected in 1999 by Cobb County for routes affecting the study area.

Cobb County Transit Ridership Routes

Route	Total Daily Boardings
15	827
20	1,056
30	460
40	384
45	312
50	1,443
101	153

According to the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), CCT currently provides coverage to 20 percent of the 345 square miles within Cobb County and serves 28 percent of residents and 54 percent of employees. The CTP assessed the overall system as deficient because of several routes with low productivity and lack of compliance with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for access to wheelchair ramps and sidewalks. However, the city continues to be aggressive in building sidewalks throughout the county with remaining sales tax dollars and federal funds. CCT also plans service expansion in South Cobb under a Regional Access to Jobs grant to increase accessibility to jobs for the transit dependent. Additionally, bus shelters continue to be installed in high impact areas through an agreement between the city and a private contractor.

Rail Options

Commuter Rail

An original statewide feasibility plan identified a possible commuter rail line to Canton through Marietta. However, the Georgia Rail Consultants did not select this line for further analysis due to low ridership estimates. More recently, the state's consultants released preliminary study results of other commuter lines that have been under further evaluation, such as an Atlanta to Athens link. The results indicate that the Statewide Commuter Rail option may be cost-prohibitive. Therefore, their recommendation included a system of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and express bus routes instead of commuter rail in the short term. Continued study of potential commuter rail in the long term was also recommended. Subsequent to the release of these results, Governor Barnes expressed his support of the recommendations.

Marietta to Lawrenceville Study

Consultants for the Atlanta Regional Commission have identified four alternative corridors for further evaluation. All corridors will affect the city and possibly the study area as a beginning point for eventual service. At this time public input is being sought for the alternatives. Candidate technologies to be analyzed once a corridor is identified include bus, bus rapid transit, monorail and light rail. Attachment "A" includes depictions of the alternatives under analysis.

Town Center/Cumberland Studies

The Town Center and Cumberland areas established self taxing districts called Community Improvement Districts for the purpose of planning and transportation improvement implementation within their boundaries. The CIDs are collaborating to study possibilities for light rail between the two activity centers. The study also includes an eventual transfer to the MARTA system at the Arts Center Station. Since the main trunk line of the proposed system is Cobb Parkway, it is probable that the LCI study area would be affected. However, according to the Atlanta Regional Commission's Transportation Improvement Program, further study of this proposal will take place in 2001 (Phase 1) and 2002 (Phase II) along with the proposed Cumberland Rail Circulator Analysis. The ARC has also programmed additional dollars to study an Arts Center to Cumberland Rail Circulator proposal in FY 2001 and 2002. Once these studies are underway, opportunities for public input of different alternatives will be maximized.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

TDM programs are designed to maximize the people-moving capability of the transportation system by increasing the number of people in a vehicle or by influencing the time of, or need to, travel. Typical TDM alternatives include carpools, vanpools, public and private transit, shuttles and non-

motorized travel such as bicycle and pedestrian programs. The CIDs have extensive TDM programs for employers in the Town Center and Cumberland areas. In closer proximity to the study area, the Kennestone Hospital activity center currently works with the Town Center Transportation Management Association (TMA)—a program of the CID—to encourage employers to provide incentives for employee use of travel alternatives. The LCI study area, as well as the Kennestone Hospital area, may benefit in the future from CCT's plans to purchase mini-buses in FY 2002 and FY 2003 to provide shuttle systems in both the Town Center and Cumberland areas. Close coordination between the City and the County will be necessary to provide true alternative connection between the Counties three main activity centers.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Sidewalks

As mentioned previously, many streets in proximity to the Square are narrow with sidewalks and street trees. The Square area is also well signed with pedestrian crosswalks and signals. These conditions provide for an enhanced pedestrian experience. However, areas farther removed from the Square feature wide suburban streets with no sidewalks or corridors with intermittent/broken sidewalks and ADA inaccessible features. An example of a corridor with intermittent/broken sidewalks is Roswell Street from the Square to Cobb Parkway. Although the City of Marietta pursues a policy of incorporating sidewalks into its transportation plans and development regulations, the need for additional sidewalks and other pedestrian scale improvements is evident along major corridors such as Cobb Parkway and Powder Springs Road. Moreover, better pedestrian connections to existing transit would benefit the study area's transit dependent population.

Bicycle Access

In the last several years the Atlanta area, including Marietta, has benefited from an increased availability of federal funds for bicycle project implementation. A key trail project for the City of Marietta is the Kennesaw Mountain to Chattahoochee River Trail. The trail master plan calls for building a system of on-road and off-road trails from Kennesaw Mountain Park through downtown Marietta, along West Atlanta Street to Atlanta Road. The trail continues along Atlanta Road for a possible eventual connection to Cobb County's Silver Comet Trail and the Chattahoochee River. The City has received some federal funding to build a pedestrian bridge along the north section of the project. Additional funding has been secured to link the trail project to the CCT transfer station and Southern Polytechnic State University (University Trail). Both projects are programmed for construction in FY 2004. (see map) Other short-term improvements implemented by the City include the installation of bicycle racks and signage at key locations, and the provision of additional space for bicycles at the same time the city improves roadway shoulders.

In the long range ARC plan (2025) the following bicycle improvement projects are programmed for early implementation and may affect the study area:

SR 120 (Whitlock Ave)	From 120 Loop to Burnt Hickory Road
Whitlock Ave	From 120 Loop to E. Park Square
Church/Cherokee St.	From Kennesaw Ave to Atlanta St.
Allgood Road	From Scufflegrit to Fairground St.
Fairground St.	From Allgood to Roswell Road
South SR 120 Loop	From Atlanta St. to Powder Springs Road

Parking

The issue of parking around the Marietta Square and its surroundings continues to be widely discussed. Comments received from the public and business owners indicate a shortage of parking spaces. Currently, there are approximately 3,000 spaces. Most parking is on surface street lots, but this number also includes a parking garage. The city is considering plans for the location of an additional parking garage in the CBD area. There are no parking meters in the square; however, hourly parking restrictions are enforced along various streets leading to and within the square.

Results of a November 1999 market study for the Marietta Square indicate that the area was underutilized in terms of lands uses and that the market potential could bear more intense land uses. The results, however, did not clearly specify a need for additional parking spaces at this time, but the recommendations did include installation of parking meters and better signs to parking facilities. The business owners and the city must clarify whether the general perception of inadequate parking refers to the physical absence of needed spaces or a lack of “free” and “convenient” spaces for customers.

Transportation and Land Use Connections

Marietta’s land use is more intense in and around the square, which is served by a grid street network. This layout provides more opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian-friendly streets, better traffic circulation into and out of the area due to the interconnection of streets, and greater opportunity for maximizing transit options. This typical grid layout also provides opportunities for more on-street parking. The issue of parking is revisited as a good example of the relation between the land use and transportation. Should the City desire to increase the market capacity in the square area, then traffic circulation and parking may be affected. More intense uses may call

for additional road capacity, or a transit option, both of which may require the space currently in use for parking. More intense uses would also require additional parking spaces and the location of any future parking facility to serve this need would need to be easily accessible to single occupant vehicles, transit, and pedestrians.

Moving away from the Central Business District area, the layout of the roadways becomes more typically suburban. The street interconnections are not as evident, wider streets are more prevalent and the pedestrian scale of the streets subsides. Additionally, roadways such as Roswell Street are lined with strip commercial/retail uses with numerous curb cuts accessing the adjacent land uses. These wider roadways leading to the study area are heavily congested; however, there are a limited number of capacity improvements possible. Only Cobb Parkway is listed in the Atlanta Regional Commission's long range plans for capacity improvements. Therefore, the city's current options to alleviate congestion leading into the study area are mainly restricted to intersection improvements and the provision of pedestrian/bicycle access and connections to future circulators leading to Kennestone, Town Center, Cumberland or the Atlanta metro area. All of these connections are supportable due to the core street grid network of the CBD. Should the Atlanta metropolitan area resolve the air quality issues currently prohibiting capacity projects, the City of Marietta could proceed to implement significant roadway projects to alleviate congestion.

Transportation Goals

The City of Marietta's 1997 Comprehensive Plan includes goal statements to provide an efficient transportation system and promote increased coordination with Cobb County in transportation planning. Goals also encourage viable transportation alternatives and a balanced multi-modal

system, including commuter and/or heavy rail linkages with other sections of metropolitan Atlanta and TDM programs such as variable work hours and ridesharing. The Comprehensive Plan also recognizes the interrelationship of land use and transportation decisions and supports land use controls to assist in traffic flow.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

Central Marietta provides a grid layout and internal connectivity that allow for better traffic and pedestrian circulation into and out of area. Additionally, the existing transportation infrastructure within the study area can support more intense land uses in conjunction with the addition of alternate modes of transportation.

Challenges to the transportation system in the study area include highly congested conditions on major roads leading to the study area. The traffic on these roadways could inadvertently spill onto local roads. Therefore, a solution to the increased amount of congestion is necessary for the development success of the study area. Also, there are many curb cuts along streets dominated by retail/commercial uses, which hamper the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

The strengths and weaknesses suggest opportunities for focused policy action in the following areas:

- Enhanced transit connections to Kennestone, Town Center, Cumberland/Galleria centers and other Metro Atlanta areas
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle access to the study area
- Enhanced pedestrian-friendly connections in the study area, including reduction in auto-orientation (frequent curbs cuts, strip commercial

design, and wide lanes) of major corridors, such as Roswell Street, and better access around square.

The site imagery and opportunities and constraints analysis maps show key areas of strength and weakness in the study area.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Understanding Marietta's local economic structure is essential for designing a long-term economic development program. This section assesses the economic climate in the downtown Marietta study area and identifies a set of opportunities and constraints.

Using CACI Marketing Systems Group demographic data and other secondary sources, this section examines local economic conditions. Assessing the economic climate of an area such as Marietta can be complicated by proximity to the metropolitan Atlanta region. There are, however, basic trends that signal the health or decline of an area. The following analysis examines regional, county, city, and local trends to determine their influence on the central city environment.

Site Location, Access and General Development Issues

Regional access to the study area is fairly good with the 120 Loop providing quick access to the northern and southern boundaries of the study area and Roswell Street providing access to the central core. However, most of the larger commercial roads are showing signs of decay, with deteriorating commercial development and areas of abandonment. These deteriorating commercial strips can be a detriment to redevelopment of the downtown and hamper access to the square.

The square acts as the central business district. While government uses cluster on the square, most new office development has moved outside the study area. There is a mixed-use project planned for close to the square, the Mill Street-Denmead Street project, which could bring new office and retail to the square area in addition to 250 planned residential units. The square hosts a collection of shops, with a predominance of antique retail stores, but also including an active theater, a dance school, bars and restaurants and other retail outlets.

The scale of the square and surrounding commercial buildings is low, mainly two or three stories, with a few taller buildings one block back from the square proper. This low-scale development gives the square its “small town, old fashion” feel. This ambiance attracts a mix of both residents and tourists.

The study area is almost completely built out; as a result future development would require redevelopment of existing uses. Redevelopment can pose special challenges to developers, such as lot constraints and the additional expense of building restoration.

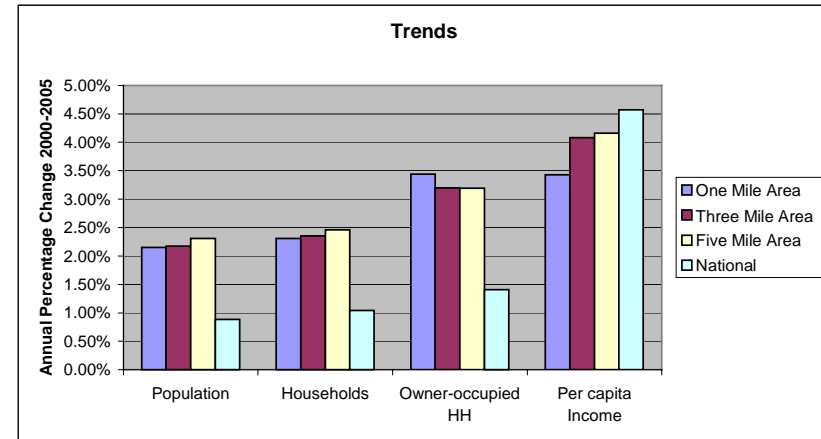
Demographic Overview

To analyze the study area we drew a series of three rings from a selected center point of the study area. The one-mile ring generally approximates the study area. The three-mile ring approximates the larger city of Marietta and the five-mile ring captures part of unincorporated Cobb County. These rings allow comparison between the study area, the overall city, and Cobb County.

It should be noted that the rings are additive. The three-mile ring contains the data in the one-mile ring and the five-mile ring contains the data for both other rings. The practical effect of this configuration is that the averages for the outer ring could be skewed down or up based on the data in the inner and middle ring.

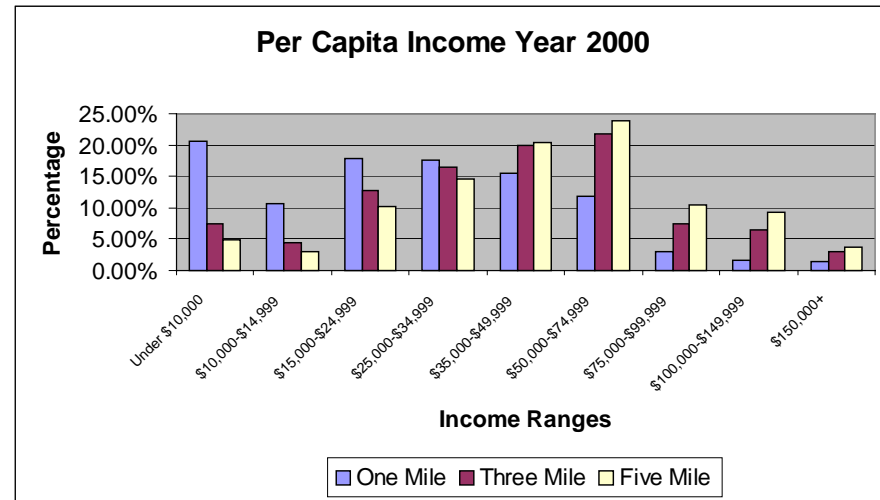
The figure below shows an overview of the trends in the study area compared to the Marietta ring, the larger Cobb County ring, and national statistics. CACI data forecast an increase at double the national rate for population, the number of households, and the number of owner-occupied households in the one-mile area. The data show that per capita income will increase at a slightly slower (and still respectable at 3.43 percent) rate than city, county or national rates.

Population, Household, Income Trends in 1, 3 and 5 Mile Rings



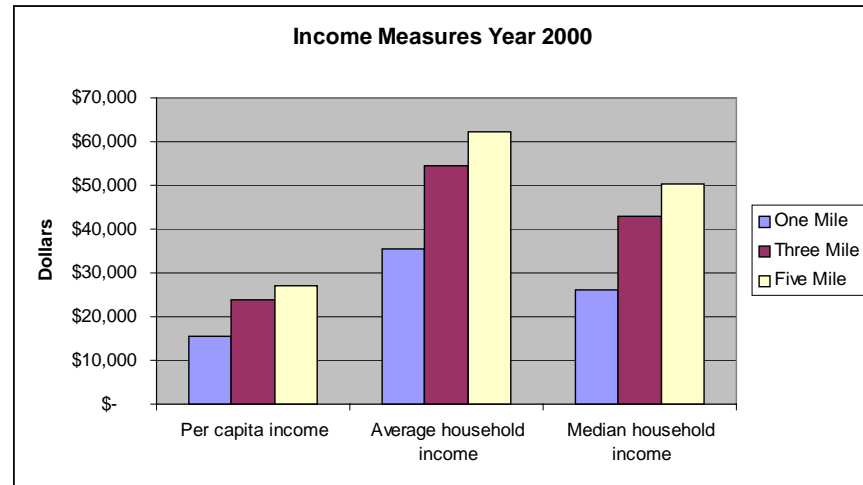
The study area is poorer per capita than either Marietta or the five-mile ring. Over 20 percent of residents within the one-mile ring have 2000 income per capita of less than \$10,000, compared to 7.4 percent of the Marietta ring and 4.9 percent of the Cobb County ring. On the other end of the spectrum only 1.5 percent of the inner ring has a per capita income of over \$150,000, compared to 3.1 and 3.7 percent for the second and third ring. Per capita income includes the income of all persons 15 years and older.

Per Capita Income in 1, 3, and 5 Mile Rings



As shown in the following figure, other measures of income include per capita income, average, and median household income. All three measures illustrate that our study area has lower income levels than the other two rings. Averages tend to be overly skewed by outlying incomes. Median household income divides the income distribution into two equal parts, one-half falling above the median and one-half below.

Income Measures in 1, 3, and 5 Mile Rings



In addition to income, the population of the inner ring tends to have fewer members in the earning years of 18 to 54. The one-mile ring population includes more younger (under 18) and older (over 54) people.

Commercial Development

The analysis collected a sample of business license data from the following key corridors in the study area:

- Roswell Street
- Atlanta Street
- Austin Avenue

- Cherokee Street
- Church Street
- South Cobb Parkway
- Lawrence Street
- Lemon Street
- North Cobb Parkway
- North Fairground Street
- North Marietta Parkway
- North Park Square
- Powder Springs Street
- South Fairground Street
- South Marietta Parkway
- South Park Square
- Washington Avenue
- West Atlanta Street
- West Park Square

According to this sample of business licenses, there are 1,246 currently licensed businesses in the study area. The table below identifies businesses by general category.

Study Area Businesses by Type

Business Type	# of Businesses	% of Total
Antique	77	6%
Auto	100	8%
Educational	13	1%
Financial Institution	13	1%
Food Service	112	9%
Grocery	13	1%
Insurance	50	4%
Non-Profit	25	2%
Professional	295	24%
Retail	177	14%
Services	375	30%
Total # of Businesses	1,246	100%

The study area features a disproportionate number of antique retailers and auto-oriented services. The area lacks daily, household-serving commercial uses, such as grocery, drug and soft goods. The cost of land in the study area has hampered efforts to recruit a new standard large grocery store. Opportunities may also exist to retrofit existing commercial corridors. The interest of chain retail stores generally increases as neighborhood revitalization occurs. Once the city can demonstrate that household demographics support additional commercial, site constraints and land costs can be more easily overcome.

The analysis also identified businesses by tenure. According to available license data, more than one-third of businesses in the study area have been open for three years or less.

Study Area Businesses by Tenure

# of Years Business Has Been Opened	# of Businesses	% of Total
1 to 3	404	37%
4 to 6	238	22%
7 to 9	163	15%
10 to 12	83	8%
13 to 15	94	9%
16+	99	9%
Total # of Business with Tenure Data	1,081	100%

Total retail spending by household reflects the incomes of the three rings. The five mile ring has the greatest retail expenditure at \$16,366 compared to the three mile expenditure of \$15,244 and the one-mile ring expenditure of \$12,076. However, breaking down household expenditures into categories reveals that the three rings do not differ greatly on annual food service and drug expenditures.

In the one-mile ring household expenditures on food service (which includes dining out) were \$4,061, compared to \$4,735 and \$4,982 in the three-mile

and five-mile rings respectively. One-mile ring households spent \$454 compared to \$474 for the three-mile ring and \$484 for the five-mile ring. These figures imply that since expenditures are nearly equal for households, a

well-placed store could capture the study area's portion of grocery and drug spending.

The city has two development authorities. The Marietta Development Authority promotes trade, industry, and employment opportunities in the city. The Downtown Marietta Development Authority (DMDA) promotes economic activity within the CBD and surrounding areas. The DMDA has the authority to issue bonds and levy a tax within its boundaries. Neither authority has a full-time professional staff resources.

Economic Development Goals

The city's Comprehensive Plan establishes goals for balanced and diverse business activity, an enhanced tax base, and quality job opportunities. Policies also support appropriate development in the central business district with emphasis on growth that increases the long-term viability of the downtown and protects architectural integrity.

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

The study area's economic strengths include location in one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas of the United States. As development continues on Atlanta's rural fringe, Marietta becomes increasingly physically accessible to the economic core of the region. However, the city's well-preserved historic character and small-town feel in a sprawling metropolitan area also provide an attractive amenity for business relocation, as well as tourist dollars and new families. Marietta is, therefore, well positioned to receive the redevelopment growth that is beginning to occur in Atlanta's closer-in suburbs. Despite this locational advantage, Marietta's development activity lags that of surrounding areas. The central city lies between the two emerging, suburban activity centers—Cumberland/Galleria and Town Center.

Additionally, educational institutions in or near the study area—Chattahoochee Tech, Kennesaw State, Southern Polytech and Life College—can attract and support increased economic activity. The city also offers a lower millage rate than the surrounding unincorporated county.

The study area population, however, is poorer than the surrounding city and county. Central Marietta also has pockets of deteriorated housing stock, distressed gateways, land use incompatibilities in residential areas, and some obsolete or vacant commercial stock. These signs of physical distress reduce investment interest. Since the central city is largely built-out there is little contiguous buildable land to offer incoming businesses. New development will require in-fill activity, which is more time-consuming and is perceived as more difficult because of land assembly from separate owners and compatibility issues with existing uses. Additionally, land prices are higher in the study area than in some surrounding underdeveloped areas, giving an advantage to outlying competitors.

These strengths and weaknesses suggest major opportunities for focused action on:

- A more stream-lined, efficient development process for in-fill activity.
- Programs to increase investment interest in the study area, perhaps including economic incentives.
- Increasing the potential customer base of the study area through improved housing opportunities.
- Enhanced business marketing strategy to increase awareness of development advantages in the area, including a city-owned utility, and proximity to educational institutions and government facilities.

The site imagery and opportunities and constraints analysis maps show key areas of strength and weakness in the study area.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public input is an essential and ongoing part of master plan development and successful policy implementation. For a plan to achieve public support, it must reflect a community's unique vision for quality of life.

To assist the city in establishing preliminary objectives, the consultant team conducted three public participation activities. First, to capture general community preferences for specific urban design elements—streetscape, architectural styles, transit amenities, housing styles—the team presented a visual survey at three workshops. Second, workshop respondents participated in a separate visioning exercise at the workshops to define what the Marietta community wants to be like in 20 years. Third, the team conducted 22 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, representing various segments of the Marietta community. Stakeholder interviews help to identify major issues and significant trends in the study area along with plan priorities.

This report is organized into four sections:

- Community Visioning Workshops
- Visioning Exercises
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Overall Visioning Themes

The findings from this report frame the master plan's basic themes, goals, and action priorities. These public participation activities also serve as a first step in promoting and sustaining community involvement throughout the planning process and implementation stage.

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOPS

The consultant team conducted three Community Visioning Workshops in support of the city's Livable Centers Initiative for downtown Marietta. The purpose of the workshops was to explore citizen preferences for urban design issues, such as:

- Land development and design standards, including land uses, building types, heights, architectural styles, density, downtown housing options and mixed-use development
- Community design features such as streets and sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, signs, pedestrian amenities, parking and open space
- Transportation options such as median-divided streets, buses and trains
- Determination of willingness-to-pay for selected public streetscape improvements

Research Process and Methods

The Community Visioning Workshops were conducted with three groups of respondents. One of those groups included City Council members, other city officials and city staff who had been invited to attend a workshop session. Two other workshops were public forums attended by members of the general public who had heard about the workshops through the media including newspaper advertisements and/or flyers. A total of 97 people attended all three sessions with 89 people completing the workshop questionnaire.

The Community Visioning Workshops involved both structured and open-ended topics and questions elicited in response to a Community Vision Survey administered to all groups. Participants also completed a short questionnaire relating to improvements for downtown Marietta. The survey images and all tabulated results from the survey and improvement questionnaire follow this section.

The Community Vision Survey involved having participants view and evaluate up to 96 color photographs to illustrate various topics including:

- Community Entrance
- Streetscapes
- Commercial Streets
- Street Improvements
- Office Buildings
- Commercial Buildings
- Townhouse/Loft

- Outdoor Cafes
- Signs
- Parking
- Pedestrian Amenities
- Town Square
- Pocket Parks
- Transit

The scenes were usually displayed in sets of four images, arranged and sequenced according to the above listed categories. Participants were asked to select the one scene from each set of images they feel “best fits in with the type of community in which they would like to live,” and mark it on a survey form. By asking participants to select one of four images, the survey was a type of “forced choice” exercise. Participants also had the option of not selecting any scene if they found none of them acceptable. Brief write-in comments were also permitted on the survey forms.

Participant Profiles

Group 1

Included primarily City Council members, as well as a small number of city officials and staffers most of whom are involved in land use development activities for the City. A total of 10 people attended this session.

Groups 2 and 3

A total of 40 attended the Group 2 workshop and 47 people attended the Group 3 workshop. Both groups appeared fairly evenly divided by gender.

The conclusions and themes identified below are based on the comments of Groups 1, 2, and 3.

To improve the representativeness of survey results, the consultant team also conducted additional workshops. The city held a community visioning session with the local Kiwanis Club. The team also held workshop meetings at two local churches heavily attended by the Latino community. The team used the Atlanta Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Member Directory and word of mouth to identify Latino business owners, supporters, and community leaders to participate in the visioning exercise. The results of these additional outreach sessions are summarized below.

Usage and Limitations of Research

The analysis contained in this report uses descriptive statistics. However, it should be noted that this information is qualitative. Results can help guide thinking, but should not be used to predict the behavior of any specific market segment. The information contained in this report is only representative of those participants who took part in the research and we cannot guarantee that the opinions they expressed (or our analysis and interpretations of those opinions) are representative of any targeted group. The best method for checking the validity of the results contained in this and any qualitative research study is continued research during all stages of the project.

Research Findings by Survey Section



Image 2



Image 3

Community Entrance (Screen 1)

Entrances with special landscape treatment, a formal monument-type sign welcoming people to the city, as well as an informal entrance sign all proved most appropriate for Marietta to workshop participants. (Images 2, 3 and 4)

- Entranceways for Marietta that combined a number of different elements, including landscaping and signage, for example, were preferred by many participants. (Images 2 and 3)
- A brick type monument sign was particularly appealing to City Council members. (Image 3)
- The inclusion of sidewalks and burying of utility wires were also important to many attendees.
- Signs communicating that the community is friendly, well cared for and has pride were considered important overall.

Public Comments:

“Signs should indicate that a community is friendly, well-cared for, and has pride”

“The city needs to be more pedestrian friendly, needs sidewalks” (Images 2 and 3)

“Needs a sidewalk on both sides of streets; flowers are a very welcoming sight” (Image 2)

“Sign doesn’t have to be brick, but not a metal sign” (Image 3)

“Pedestrian friendly; inviting” (Image 4)



Image 6

Streetscapes (Boulevard – Medians, Route 41) (Screen 2)

- 81% of survey participants considered an image of a median, which included ground cover and trees to be the most appropriate alternative for Marietta. Many considered it visually appealing, affordable and easy to maintain. (Image 6)
- Concern about the possibility that trees could block visibility and thus be inappropriate for busier roadways was also expressed.
- The need to correct visual clutter created by ugly signs and overhead wires was considered by many to be essential to improving the overall look of Marietta roadways even if trees were included.
- The need to beautify Roswell Street was considered the fifth most important improvement needed for Marietta.
- However, during Community Visioning Workshop discussions, some citizens expressed reservations about attempting costly median improvements along portions of Route 41 where abutting signage and site conditions are so negative as to overwhelm any upgrade.

Comments on Boulevard:

“Need to get rid of signs”

“Concern that trees in median may present road hazard and expose city to liability”

“You can never go wrong adding more greenery into the landscape.”

“Trees in the middle do not address both sides of road which are a disaster” (Image 6)

“Images 6 and 8 are good for pedestrians and bicyclists”



Image 12

Streetscapes (Screen 3)

- The streetscape with less signage and no overhead utility wires was rated as appropriate for Marietta by 80% of survey respondents. (Image 12)
- The pedestrian-friendly quality of this streetscape was particularly appealing to many participants who responded positively to sidewalks separated from the road by a grass planting strip and shade trees. (Image 12)
- The perception that this streetscape would also be good for biking also contributed to its high quality. (Image 12)
- Streetscapes with prominent signage and overhead utility wires were preferred by only 1% of those responding.

Comments on Streetscapes:

“Like the shade trees, on-street bike path, sidewalks and buried powerlines” (Image 12)

“Trees are important; pedestrian friendly” (Image 12)

“Pedestrian access and road narrowing” (Image 12)

“Sidewalks and trees are winners” (Image 12)

“Sidewalks in image 12 are nice - separation from street”

“Like absence of powerlines in images 11 and 12”

“Visibility is questionable. Concern that trees in intersection block visibility.” (Image 12)

“Businesses must also clean up their signs.” (Image 9)



Image 16



Image 20

Commercial Streets (Screens 4 and 5)

- Urban streetscapes with pedestrian-friendly qualities were seen as appropriate for Marietta by the overwhelming majority (70 -71%) of those surveyed. (Images 16 and 20)
- Commercial sidewalks with decorative paving and shade trees but no planting strip were perceived as having some historic character that would blend in well in Marietta. (Image 16 and Image 20)
- A more residential-scale commercial streetscape with buildings separated from the street by a sidewalk and grass strip was also well liked by many citizen respondents. This was seen as applicable in locations that are less urban. (Image 15)
- Trees and narrower streets and the use of awnings also contributed to a streetscape's popularity. (Image 20)
- Parallel parking along the street with quick access to retail proved especially appealing, though some participants also expressed a desire to see angled parking. (Images 16 and 20)
- Elimination of both power lines and parking meters was especially desired by some.
- Commercial streets that appeared more auto-friendly than pedestrian-friendly received the lowest ratings.

Comments on Commercial Streets:

“Image 16 looks like it could blend in here.”

“The architecture in Image 16 is compatible with buildings that already exist in Marietta”

“Parking and quick access to retail is functional.” (Image 16)

“Like the café area because it is separated from pedestrian area” (Image 16)

“Image 16 has an in-town, urban feel; Image 15 is not appropriate for corridor areas”

“Image 15 looks like a small town, good sidewalk setback”

“Awnings are nice, shade is important in southern climate.” (Image 20)

“Powerlines detract from the area”

“Burying power lines is a critical aesthetic issue.”

“Don’t want parking meters”

“Marietta is noted for its historic character”

“Architectural details and trees shown in Image 20 are nice.”

“Trees are good - a good walking area” (Image 19)

“Pedestrian friendly, narrow streets, with on-street parking” (Image 20)

“Like trees, brick detail is nice touch. Use angled parking” (Images 19 and 20)

“Like the human scale of Image 20”



Image 24



Image 28

Street Improvements (Screens 6, 7 and 8)

- Streetscapes with building set forward to create a pedestrian-friendly street including sidewalks, ground level storefronts and parallel parking proved the most appropriate for Marietta with respondents. (Image 24).
- Increasing the number of sidewalks was ranked the third most important improvement for Marietta by questionnaire respondents.
- The concept of incorporating residential buildings on the same streetscape with commercial buildings was appealing to many. (Image 24)
- The preservation/incorporation of some green space seemed crucial to many who wanted to avoid excess density. (Image 23).
- Streets where utility wires had been buried, billboards/signs removed and buildings brought up toward the street were seen as most appropriate. (Image 28)
- Streets that appeared more auto-friendly than pedestrian-friendly received the lowest ratings.
- The placing of utility wires underground was considered the second most important improvement needed in Marietta by questionnaire respondents.
- 72% of those surveyed were willing to pay more taxes for streetscape improvements, including 31% who were willing to pay an extra \$51 - \$100 a year for such improvements. Many preferred such funds to be raised via the sales tax.
- Caution was raised, however, regarding buildings brought too close to the street edge. (Image 28).

- Parking behind buildings proved an appropriate option for many. (Image 28)
- The overall need to reduce the speed of neighborhood traffic was considered by questionnaire respondents to be the most important improvement needed for Marietta.

Comments on Street Improvements:

“As density is increased, you need to make sure that you create pocket parks”

“Image 23 preserves green space, has underground utilities, grass, trees in median and on sidewalk, good use of upper levels, perhaps residential.”

“Put people where they work - the residential elements blend in nicely with surrounding area” (Image 24)

“Likes parks and wants green space to be preserved”

“Image 27 represents what could be done now.”

“Get signs off the sidewalk” (Image 28)

“Goal is final development, including private sector money following public investment; lighting is a public plus; density equates to efficient access to public needs” (Image 24)

“Would pay more if began to see real improvements.”

“I’d prefer to pay a sales tax or lodging tax”

“Nice ain’t free.”

“Prefer parking behind buildings”

“Put parking behind buildings, as well as on street (alleys)”



Image 31



Image 96

Office Buildings (Screens 9 and 10)

- Two-story brick office/mixed-use buildings that had traditional (54%) or neo-traditional styles (57%) were preferred over more modern, three story office buildings. (Images 31 and 32)
- Comments indicated that the “street-friendly” quality and suggestion of some type of multi-use contributed to the high rating of one of the office buildings. (Image 31)
- In terms of larger multi-story offices, those with a more traditional style including an articulated 2-story base received the highest rating. (Images 93 and 96)
- Tall office buildings with unadorned facades and a box-like quality received the lowest ratings (Images 29, 30 and 33)
- Written comments and public discussion indicated, however, that there was great resistance to tall office buildings.

Comments on Office Buildings:

“Prefer to see houses remain in residential use instead of converting to office, but at least it preserves existing historical buildings.”

“This type of building seems to lend itself to connectivity of subsequent buildings attached in later development” (Image 31)

“Image 31 is multi-use and street friendly.”

“Images 31 & 32 could provide residential space upstairs”

“Reusing existing houses also leaves trees; Image 35 is a good re-use of existing old commercial building”



Image 40

Commercial Buildings (Screens 11 and 12)

- A two-story, neo-traditional mixed-use building with ground level storefronts and awnings was considered appropriate for Marietta by survey respondents (75%). (Image 40)
- This building's height and style including fenestration, use of bricks and canvas awnings all contributed to its high ratings. (Image 40)
- A smaller scale neo-traditional commercial building with varied storefronts also proved to be respondents' most popular choice (60%). (Image 43)
- Comments indicated that the impression this building created of being traditional and well-maintained contributed to its high ratings. (Image 43)
- The on-street parking in front of both of these commercial buildings also appealed to many respondents. (Images 40 and 43).
- Commercial buildings, which appeared box-like, had permanent “strip” signs or fronted on vast undefined, space received the lowest ratings. (Images 37, 38 and 41)

Comments on Commercial Buildings:

“Use existing buildings and refurbish”

“Like on-street parking in small areas” (Image 43)

“Image 44 would be good as a transition for area just off the town square.”

“I like commercial and office space that looks like housing as a transition style from a business to residential area; but if a street is purely business then I have no problem with a commercial/office building that doesn’t look like housing as long as there is some level of Georgia charm, like brick or shuttered windows.”



Image 47

Commercial Streets (Screen 13)

- All the commercial streetscapes showing buildings with residential scale and form as well as front porches were considered appropriate for Marietta by respondents. (Images 46, 47 and 48.)
- Comments indicated that ample grass, wide sidewalks and trees also added to streetscape appeal. (Images 47 and 48)
- Commercial streets with vast, undefined space received the lowest rating. (Image 45)
- Commercial streets, which had newly built commercial buildings as well as adaptive re-use commercial buildings were considered appropriate for Marietta.

Comments on Commercial Streets:

“Image 46 because house is charming and quaint”

“Like the street lights and banners; sets it off a little” (Image 46)

“Like the sidewalk being off the street and wide; keep trees” (Images 46 and 48)

“Image 47 is nice because it is a commercial use with residential character.”

“In-town parks are a must with commercial mixed-use; otherwise you have to drive to a park or green space; it’s unrealistic to expect everyone to live where they work and people

currently living in subdivisions won't go for adding businesses, so to expect only cities to have green is ridiculous"



Image 49

Commercial Uses-Mixed Use (Screen 14)

- A two-story, mixed-use, neo-traditional streetscape displaying a variety of building facades was overwhelmingly rated as appropriate for Marietta by survey respondents (75%). (Image 49)
- The architectural variety, scale and use of brick were all reasons given for preferring this streetscape. Many also found the angled parking in front of the building appealing. (Image 49)
- The image of a large chain store was rated as least appropriate for Marietta. (Image 50)

Comments on Commercial Uses-Mixed Use:

"Image 49 is quaint but nicely done, appears to have developed over time."

"Having residential keeps a downtown relevant." (Image 52)



Image 54

Townhouse/Loft (Screen 15)

- Traditional urban townhouses, (especially one with streetscape details), were considered appropriate for Marietta by the majority of survey respondents (69%). (Image 54)
- A more raw looking loft building which was seen to be a good use of an old building including a good use of space was preferred by almost a third of respondents (31%). (Image 53)

Comments on Townhouse/Loft:

"Image 53 is a good use of an old building"

"Image 54 is very attractive and looks very friendly."

Outdoor Cafes (Screen 16)

- A sidewalk café that was adjacent to a sidewalk with some element or landscaped edge was preferred by the majority of Workshop participants (55%) including, especially, those representing the city officials. (Image 60)
- The fact that the café was separated from the sidewalk and the street made it appear safer and less crowded for patrons and passersby contributed to this scene's high ratings. (Image 60)
- The streetscape, which showed a wide sidewalk with decorative paving but no specific outdoor dining area received the lowest rating.



Image 60

Comments on Outdoor Cafes:

"Leave the sidewalks open enough to walk in." (Image 60)

"Likes outdoor dining to be separated from pedestrians"

"Any outdoor café is good; I think this is a wonderful option"



Image 63

Signs (Screens 17 and 18)

- Low, monument-based signs on the highway and on commercial streetscapes including, especially, smaller monument-based signs were preferred by survey participants (84%). (Images 63, 64 and 68)

- Overall, however, comments indicated that workshop participants preferred fewer or no signs, just signs on buildings or signs that maintained a low profile.
- Comments indicated that many wanted there to be some kind of control over the design and height of signs.

Comments on Signs:

“Image 64 is okay for multiple sign areas rather than having several sign types in a row.”

“Street number is most useful; monuments are useful for small malls; small and informative signs are best”

“All are nice and small for walkers” (Images 65, 67, 68)

“Image 66 is clear but unobtrusive, public right of way signs are user friendly”

“Consistent signs would look like Disneyland; have controlled variety”

“You need quick identification of stop when you are driving” (Images 62, 63, 64)

“Rather have signs on buildings only”



Image 70

Parking (Screens 19 and 20)

- Head-in, angled parking in front of retail uses was the parking option most preferred by participants (49%). (Image 70)
- Comments indicated that many felt a combination of on-street and deck/parking lots was needed.
- Vast parking lots or parking decks set up against the street with no street trees were considered least appropriate for Marietta. However, open

parking lots with landscaping (51%), as in Image 74, or decorative paving and decorative streetlights (40%) were considered appropriate for Marietta by many survey respondents. (Images 73 and 75)

Comments on Parking:

“Like angled parking and parking in the back of buildings.”

“Image 70 is more inviting but the parking garage in Image 69 is practical and may be needed as well as on street parking”

“Like small, off street lots” (Image 71)

“Keep parking behind building or use shared parking”

“Image 73 would be nicer with more trees in the parking area”



Image 78

Pedestrian Amenities (Screen 21)

- Scenes which included rich streetscape detailing and with substantial pedestrian amenities received the highest ratings. (Images 78 and 80)
- A pedestrian crossing and kiosk were also community amenities that participants mentioned liking. (Images 79 and 80)
- The street without historic lighting, benches or decorative paving received the lowest ratings. (Image 77)

Comments on Pedestrian Amenities:

“Like the kiosk idea - we need more central information” (Image 80)

“Benches are nice, flowers are great”



Image 81

Town Square (Screen 22)

A town square, which appeared pedestrian-friendly and is surrounded by low-rise buildings, paved sidewalks, angled parking and landscaping was preferred by the majority of those surveyed (61%). (Image 81)

Comments indicated that the architecture, including its historic style and mixed-use quality, all contributed to the high ratings of this town square image. (Image 81)

Comments on Town Square:

“Image 81 looks like lots of different buildings put up at different times, all with slightly different character.”

“Keep old buildings and current look and feel; expanding it outward.”
(Image 81)

“Any buildings with multiple stories should not be on the side of the square when we can see the view of the mountain.” (Image 83)



Image 87

Pocket Parks (Screen 23)

- A park looking out onto a neighborhood green with an “open feel” was the image that participants indicated was most appropriate for Marietta (57%). (Image 87)
- An image of a tot lot in an open area received the lowest rating (13%).

Comments on Pocket Parks:

"Images 87 and 88, concerned about kids escaping from parents; no fences to contain them"

"Develop multiple squares instead of just the main square."

"Image 88 is nice but add trees/shading over playground for heat/sun protection."

"Fountains or a pond would be nice."



Image 91

Transit (Screen 24)

- Trolley was the means of transport most preferred by those surveyed.
- Many also commented that they wished to see a light rail service.
- In fact, the need to create a rush hour commuter rail service to Atlanta and other centers was considered by questionnaire respondents to be the fourth most essential improvement needed for Marietta.

Comments on Transit:

"Need trolley in town and light rail commuter line"

"Only something with an old-fashioned look" (Image 91)

"We need light rail too"

"Trolley here locally, light rail to Atlanta and Alpharetta"

"Also need bike paths leading to the Marietta Square"

"Trolley for the square"

Conclusions and Recommendations

CORE VALUES, essential themes that ran throughout the survey, included citizens' desire to:

- preserve and enhance buildings and streetscapes, which reflect historical/traditional styles as crucial to Marietta's place identity
- beautify/increase the visual appeal of Marietta's roadways including, especially, the elimination of visual clutter created by overhead utility wires and unattractive signs and billboards
- slow traffic by introducing a variety of traffic calming strategies
- create pedestrian-friendly streets wherever possible by increasing the number of sidewalks and creating appropriate, visually-appealing separation between people and vehicles
- establish/redevelop commercial districts with mixed-uses, including upper floor apartments and multi-family buildings
- enhance the "green" quality of Marietta via the planting of street trees and other landscaping as well as the maintenance of neighborhood/pocket parks
- improve transportation options by exploring the provision of a rail service while reducing the volume and speed of neighborhood traffic

Specific Recommendations

Entrances and Streetscapes

- Develop design standards for Marietta's entryways and main boulevards that restrict the size of signage and encourage the use of monument or other signage that prevents visual clutter and communicates that Marietta is a welcoming, well-cared for community with pride.
- Where possible, create visually appealing medians, including groundcover and trees on main boulevards, taking care not to obstruct drivers' visibility.
- Improve the visual appeal of streetscapes by exploring the option of burying utility wires on community entrances, main boulevards, and pedestrian-oriented commercial streets.
- Encourage the use of historic streetlights and banners to raise the visual appeal and give identity to streetscapes.
- Develop "pedestrian-friendly" design standards for all commercial/mixed-use corridors and streetscapes. These should address on-street parking, sidewalks, planting strips, street trees, decorative paving, lampposts, canopies, awnings and pedestrian amenities, such as street furniture.
- Ensure that a pedestrian realm is clearly defined and separated from moving vehicles by both horizontal elements such as grass planting strips and sidewalks and pedestrian-scale vertical elements such as shade trees or lamp posts that also reinforce the human-scale of the buildings and streetscape.
- Retrofit commercial streets to add pedestrian-friendly areas and amenities, such as retail on the ground floor of buildings and sidewalk cafes.

- Encourage the development of commercial streetscapes, which contain more urban and traditional building character, thereby discouraging chain store, strip-type development.
- Retrofit commercial corridors to add a mix of uses, especially housing, that is generally lacking in such locations.
- Ensure that higher densities are accompanied by high quality landscaping and open spaces.
- Employ techniques of traffic management and calming to reduce vehicular speeds and prevent cut through traffic on neighborhood streets.
- Create additional or improve existing bicycle connections where appropriate.
- Revise codes to replace auto-oriented site development standards with site, architectural and landscape design standards that reflect the preferred vision of the community.

Commercial, Mixed-Use and Residential Buildings

- Encourage the creation of both large and small retail and office buildings that preserve, enhance and reflect the historical/traditional character of Marietta, while also projecting a modern, urban, forward thinking image crucial to Marietta's identity of place.
- Discourage "generic-type" strip commercial development that does not reflect the community's vision.
- Consider providing density bonuses and/or streamlined approvals to encourage mixed-use development of commercial streetscapes, including a residential component.

- Encourage the breaking-up the “box-like” or homogenous massing used for some buildings by encouraging articulation of building facades, including the addition of awnings/canopies.
- Provide diversity in terms of downtown housing options by supporting the development of both traditional urban townhouses and the retrofitting of loft type buildings.
- Further help create a sense of place identity by encouraging variety of architecture and architectural details. Encourage the use of brick and masonry in more intensively developed commercial areas. Clapboard would be a good choice when transitioning to residential areas.
- Encourage retail stores to be located along active “pedestrian-friendly” sidewalks including the development of sidewalk cafes in areas that clearly separate seating from pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Also encourage the creation of active streetscapes by supporting the adaptive re-use of homes for retail use in appropriate locations, including transition areas to residential neighborhoods.
- Develop site, architectural and landscape design standards for commercial and multi-family development that reflect the preferred vision of the community.

Signs

- Develop design standards for Marietta’s entryways and main boulevards that restrict the size of signage and encourage the use of monument or other signage that prevents visual clutter and communicates that Marietta is a friendly, welcoming, well-cared for community with pride.

- Develop design standards for Marietta's downtown streetscapes that establish guidelines for various types of signs appropriate to the preferred vision of the community.

Parking

- Encourage a combination of downtown parking options, including especially parallel and head-in, angled parking in front of retail as well as discreetly designed parking lots and decks.
- Encourage the placement of any parking lots to the rear or side of commercial buildings.
- Encourage the detailing of open parking lots with landscaping, decorative paving and/or decorative streetlights in keeping with the preferred vision of Marietta citizens.
- Reduce the dominance of vast, open parking lots.

Pedestrian Amenities

- Develop "pedestrian-friendly" design standards for all commercial and arterial streets to include sidewalks, planting strips, street trees, decorative lampposts, canopies, awnings, and pedestrian amenities such as street benches.
- Where appropriate, encourage the inclusion of well-marked/texture-paved pedestrian crossings and kiosks.

Town Square

- Support the further revitalization of the town square as a pedestrian-friendly public space that includes well-detailed sidewalks, angled parking

and landscaping in keeping with the preferred vision of Marietta's citizens.

- Encourage the preservation/enhancement of existing buildings and the creation of new buildings around the town square, which reflect the historical/traditional styles that form Marietta's place identity.
- Encourage liveliness of streets surrounding the square via mixed-use development.

Pocket Parks

- Emphasize green space/landscaping in neighborhoods by encouraging a variety of pocket parks within the downtown area.
- Ensure that areas targeted for higher density development/redevelopment include some component of well-detailed/well-landscaped open space.

Transit

- Consider expanding transit opportunities to include trolley and light rail service.
- Overall, however, while survey results indicate receptivity to increased transit opportunities, it is recommended that conclusions about the viability and usage of transit be drawn in relation to the comprehensive study of transport currently being conducted for the City of Marietta.

Additional Community Workshops

Four representatives of the Latino community participated in the visual preference survey. Areas of consensus among the participants included: a streetscape image (Screen 11) with landscaping and flowers, an urban streetscape (Screen 28) with street furniture and outdoor seating, a traditional commercial street (Screen 49), and townhomes (Screen 54).

An additional 27 participants completed the improvement priority questionnaire. Participants placed the highest priority on:

- Creating more outdoor dining
- Beautifying Roswell Street
- Offering rail service

The city also administered an additional 90 visual preference surveys to members of the local Kiwanis Club. Participants most strongly preferred townhomes (Screen 54), landscaped medians on Cobb Parkway (Screen 6), an urban commercial street with pedestrian orientation (Screen 16), a streetscape with street trees (Screen 12), neo-traditional commercial buildings (Screen 40), and an urban streetscape (Screen 28) with street furniture and outdoor seating.

An additional 52 respondents completed the improvement priority questionnaire. Respondents assigned higher priority to the following items:

- Adding trees and grass medians on Cobb Parkway
- Adding benches in key locations
- Creating on-road bike lanes

- Creating more pocket parks downtown

VISIONING EXERCISES

The consultant team asked 87 participants attending the two public workshops to respond to the following three questions:

What are the things that you like best about downtown Marietta?

What are the things that you would change about downtown Marietta?

What is your vision for the entire Marietta community over next 20 years?

A facilitator recorded verbal responses from the two workshop audiences, which consisted of 40 and 47 people. The section that follows shows all tabulated results from the visioning exercises.

The most commonly cited positive attributes associated with the downtown are:

- parks and open spaces, particularly Glover Park
- historic character and architecture
- historical pride and tradition
- quaintness and small town feel
- trees

- the diversity of the population

The aspects of downtown that participants would most like to change generally involve:

- increasing the number of sidewalks, paths, and open spaces
- improving the quality of available housing, particularly the rehabilitation of decaying rental homes
- enhancing the aesthetics of major corridors
- controlling sign clutter
- eliminating vacant and underused strip malls

After providing their responses about overall city vision, participants' answers were posted around the meeting room. Each person in the two workshop audiences received a total of five dot-shaped stickers. Participants then placed the dots next to the recorded issues about which they felt most strongly to help indicate priority. A total of 348 dots were spread among the 47 issues listed. The table below shows the ten most highly ranked elements of desired city vision:

Top Ten Priorities of Overall City Vision

Issue	Ranking	% Selecting Issue
Resolved auto traffic	1	7.5%
More mass transit	2	6.9%
More green space	3	6.6%
Sidewalks everywhere	4	6.0%
Redeveloped corridors	5	6.0%
Better sign control	6	5.7%
More bike paths/lanes	7	5.5%
More mixed uses	8	5.2%
Diversify population/neighborhoods	9	4.0%
All underground utilities	10	3.7%

STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

This section summarizes findings from a total of 22 stakeholder interviews selected from a list of identified community representatives. The consultant team conducted most of the interviews using either face-to-face or telephone discussions. Several respondents completed written surveys. The section that follows shows the survey instrument and an overall matrix, which summarizes participant comments. To ensure respondent confidentiality, this section generalizes specific remarks. The sections below highlight particular areas of consensus among interviewed participants.

The survey grouped questions into nine broad categories:

- general overview
- land use
- urban design
- open space
- housing
- neighborhoods
- transportation
- economic development
- overall vision

Most questions were open-ended, allowing the respondents to raise any issue of individual importance. Several questions structured answers with scaled responses to permit direct comparison among participants.

General Overview

A majority of respondents identified traffic conditions and transportation-related issues, along with redevelopment and management of change as the main issues affecting the city overall.

When citing the major strengths of downtown Marietta, most participants focused on:

- Glover Park/town square
- historic character and architecture
- small town ambiance
- centralized place of government and community activities

Respondents generally saw traffic congestion as the major weakness of downtown. Other respondents cited lax zoning controls and code enforcement, and unbalanced, low-quality development as key weak spots in the downtown core.

Respondents thought that the master plan should include an emphasis on economic redevelopment and increased economic activity balanced with preservation of the physical character of the area. Many stakeholders also stressed the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock, while maintaining community inclusiveness and affordable housing opportunities.

A large majority of interviewees thought that plan success depended on community buy-in and support. Respondents also stressed collaborative action among neighborhood groups, developers, business owners, and government officials. Several participants focused on strong implementation, including adequate funding.

Land Use

Most respondents did not identify any current development that they liked. Several liked storefronts around the square.

Most survey participants disliked the lack of new development and the character and appearance of existing development.

Respondents were fairly evenly divided on the current mix of available services. Several, however, specifically cited a lack of balance in commercial activity.

Interviewees rated the following six alternative services/land uses on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 representing the strongest interest in seeing more of the land use provided in the downtown area. The table below shows the average score and ranking of land use types. Respondents showed a particularly strong interest in adding entertainment, professional offices, and housing to the downtown, but little interest in expanding the specialized retail market.

Ranking of Alternative Land Use Types in Downtown

Land Use/Service	Ranking	Average Score
Entertainment (restaurants, bars, theaters)	1	4.09
Business/Professional Offices (accountants, bankers, lawyers)	2	4.05
Residential	3	3.96
General, Large Scale Retail (grocery store, drug store)	4	3.22
Personal Services (hair salon, dry cleaning)	5	3.04
Specialized Retail (novelty, antique shops)	6	2.91

Urban Design

When asked to identify current areas of the city that evoke a positive and inviting sense of place, a large majority of respondents choose the square and Church and Cherokee Streets. Other areas chosen included: Sessions Street, Whitlock Avenue, the main library on Roswell Street, and Kennesaw Avenue.

Almost all respondents thought that new development or redevelopment should show sensitivity to design and physical context, particularly in

preserving the attractive historic elements of downtown. A number of stakeholders specifically cited the importance of design guidelines or architectural controls.

When asked about existing appearance problems, respondents primarily cited dilapidated housing, along with the visual clutter associated with signs, a lack of landscaping, and marginal business activity.

Interviewees rated the following four alternative development types on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 representing the strongest interest in seeing more of the style provided in the downtown area. The following table shows the average score and ranking of development alternatives. Respondents expressed the strongest support for the conversion of existing structures and the recreation of traditional neighborhood form, along with more mixed use activity.

Ranking of Alternative Development Types in Downtown

Development Type	Ranking	Average Score
Conversions of Existing Buildings (old warehouses into lofts)	1	4.22
Traditional Neighborhood Design (Virginia-Highlands, Decatur)	2	4.13
Mixed Use Development (combined retail and housing)	3	4.13
New Office/Professional Buildings	4	3.17

Parks and Open Space

A large majority of stakeholders wanted to see additional parks and open space provided in the downtown with suggestions for connections to Kennesaw Park from the CBD and Marietta Conference Center, the conversion of old rail lines and obsolete shopping malls into trails and reclaimed green space, and pocket parks.

Housing

Almost all survey participants noted appearance problems with the existing housing stock in the central city. Interviewees recommended the removal or rehabilitation of distressed housing and stricter code enforcement as a means of improving overall housing quality.

Interviewees rated the following six alternative housing types on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 representing the strongest interest in seeing more of the housing type offered in the downtown area. The following table shows the average score and ranking of housing alternatives. Respondents preferred conversions of existing structures into lofts and townhouses. Interviewees showed little support for additional duplexes and multi-family rental complexes.

Ranking of Alternative Housing Types in Downtown

Housing Type	Ranking	Average Score
Loft Conversions	1	4.17
Townhomes	2	3.41
Single-Family Detached Homes	3	3.30
Condos	4	3.22
Duplexes	5	2.35
Multi-Family Complexes	6	1.77

Neighborhoods

Respondents generally thought that housing renovation, stricter code enforcement, streetscaping, and traffic flow improvements would enhance the attractiveness of existing neighborhoods.

Respondents identified well-maintained properties, streetscaping and landscaping, community diversity, and good architecture as contributors to a neighborhood's special character.

Transportation

Respondents cited a wide variety of obstacles to the efficient movement of cars and people through the central city with the most common revolving around:

- congested traffic flow, especially in east-west corridors
- lack of connectivity and alternative access
- railroad tracks
- controversy of any proposed road widening, particularly along Whitlock Avenue

To improve the movement of people, respondents recommended:

- more connectivity, including sidewalks and better crosswalks
- alternative transportation forms, such as transit
- road widening or designation of roads as one-way routes

Interviewees rated the following seven alternatives to the automobile on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 representing the strongest interest in seeing more of the transportation type offered in the downtown area. The table below shows the average score and ranking of transportation alternatives. Stakeholders most strongly supported a more pedestrian-friendly city center, but expressed limited interest in a heavy rail transportation system.

Ranking of Transportation Alternatives in Downtown

Alternative Transportation	Ranking	Average Score
Walking	1	4.57
Carpool/Park and Ride Lot	2	4.04
Bicycle	3	3.74
Commuter Rail	4	3.43
Light Rail/Trolley	5	3.39
Buses	6	3.17
Heavy Rail	7	2.35

Respondents thought that people would be more likely to use alternatives to the auto if other transportation choices were convenient, accessible, safe, affordable, and efficient.

Economic Development

Most survey participants saw limited parking, traffic congestion, and a lack of an adequate customer base as the biggest threats to the viability of existing businesses in the downtown.

Stakeholders cited additional parking, an improved marketing approach, and more diversity in the mix and quality of services as a means to increase investment and shopper interest in downtown businesses.

Respondents recommended the addition of the following services to the downtown area:

- upscale dining
- bookstores
- upscale clothiers
- grocery store
- high technology/business incubators

When asked to identify the priority areas to be targeted for redevelopment, respondents identified:

- main corridors, including Roswell Street and the Loop
- deteriorated residential areas, such as Hedges Street and West Dixie Avenue
- the square, particularly the Strand Theater

Overall Vision

When asked to define what should be the city's first priority in making improvements to the central city, most participants focused on improving traffic flow, beautifying the area, and maintaining and promoting architectural quality.

When envisioning the city in the future, survey respondents frequently mentioned:

- a people-friendly atmosphere and small town feel
- a unique identity
- a pedestrian-friendly environment
- better balance of land uses and services
- a mix of upscale retail
- new housing types
- a self-sufficient and cohesive community
- inclusiveness and cultural diversity

OVERALL VISIONING THEMES

This section summarizes the overall issues, ideas, and themes raised by public participants in the three workshops, visioning exercises, and stakeholder interviews.

These themes form the basis of mission statements and goals that guide plan development and implementation.

Overall, the public envisions Marietta and its downtown as:

- A place that creates a people-friendly environment and an inviting small town feel;
- A place that forms a rich and unique historic tradition that is preserved through rehabilitation and promoted through diverse but compatible new architecture and design;
- A place that protects the human-scale and pedestrian-friendly access of traditional cities;
- A place that offers well-maintained houses in a wide variety of styles and prices;
- A place where neighborhoods are free of traffic;
- A place that offers big trees, green space, parks, paths, and trails;
- A place with lively streets that have both shopping and housing;
- A place with landscaped streets that have sidewalks and free of big signs and utilities;

- A place with diverse entertainment and shopping options, including dining, clothing stores, book stores, and children's attractions;
- A place where people can shop near their homes for everyday household needs;
- A place where people have convenient, safe, and flexible transportation options, including walking, bicycling, driving or transit.
- A community that is culturally diverse and welcomes people of all backgrounds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder Quote:

“We have a jewel now, the town Square.”



Marietta’s built environment, particularly the relationship of buildings to the community’s landscape, layout, and history, make it a special place. The larger purpose of the Master Plan is to preserve this rich physical and cultural foundation, while adding compatible growth.

Based on exiting conditions analysis and public input, the recommendations section focuses on the central theme of recreating a community of neighborhoods and businesses that reflect the cherished qualities of the town Square—historic character and traditional design, human-scale, open spaces, and a pedestrian feel.

The idea is not to transform the City of Marietta into a mixed use, high-density area. The purpose of the plan is to encourage compatible growth in the existing urban center. This development pattern preserves choice by allowing outlying areas of the city to remain at lower suburban densities, while achieving a denser, but walkable, downtown village environment in the traditional core. Directing growth to the core breaks the cycle of conventional mid-density sprawl that traps communities in traffic congestion, consumes large areas of green space, and dilutes sense of place.

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Master Plan divides the study area into three geographic parts that should be functionally linked to create a livable downtown: corridors; activity centers; and neighborhoods. This section also addresses the overall development structure influencing central city growth. The sections below present a narrative description of recommended strategies and specific actions designed to strengthen each of these four areas. The Master Plan figure in the appendix shows the physical layout of strategies within the study area. The Master Plan is strictly conceptual and is not intended to represent parcel-specific recommendations.

This section stresses targeted and collaborative approaches. First, given the reality of limited resources, the Master Plan identifies specific geographic areas of the central city where investment can produce significant impacts. Secondly, these strategies rely on a working partnership between the public and private sectors. Strategies recommend government actions to enhance collective spaces and balance development activity with broad community goals. The city, however, cannot fully revive the downtown alone. To be effective, the plan must also attract and sustain the ongoing interest of private businesses and community volunteers.

The following section assembles input from public comments, local government feedback, and the consultant team analysis. The recommendations are intended as general strategies that address existing deficiencies, while reflecting the community themes expressed during the public involvement portion of plan development. Any effects of these general approaches will be seen in plan implementation when these policies are translated into specific, legislative actions within a framework for ongoing community involvement.

Strategy 1: Corridors



A comfortable and attractive street setting invites pedestrian activity.

Streets form the main public spaces of a community. They give a place its distinct character, invite social interaction, and provide coherence to the urban form. In our auto-dominated age, however, streets rarely perform these traditional roles. Conventional strip planning reduces street function to the movement of cars. The wide lanes, curb cuts, large front building setbacks, and front-lot surface parking meant to accommodate auto travel create a hostile environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Given these design characteristics, roads are often clogged with stop-and-go traffic, frustrating their single purpose of efficient auto travel. Along with limited function, strip corridors attract auto-oriented commercial services of homogeneous design. Such corridors produce a featureless environment that drains an area of its unique visual qualities.

The purpose of this strategy is to rejuvenate the tradition of active community life by enhancing the appearance and public function of streets. Improvements—both public and private—along key corridors can help the community to reassert its identity, re-invite public activity in comfortable settings, and spark renewed business interest in the study area.

Action 1.1 Corridor Streetscapes

Current corridors in the study area are visually cluttered with unsightly overhead utilities, obtrusive signs, and extensive surface parking. According to community visioning exercises, Marietta residents prefer streets with design features, such as:

- shade trees on either side of the road
- a planted median
- landscape buffers composed of native plant materials

- pedestrian scale, ornamental lighting
- buried utilities
- sidewalks with a clear zone for pedestrian movement

Designated corridor streetscapes are a publicly led effort to add special design elements to the public zone of the street—that area from the back of the curb to the building front. Attractive streetscaping reflects a community's pride in its architectural and cultural heritage. Public design elements can also set the foundation for complementary private sector reinvestment.

Good design distinguishes streets by their visibility and function. A series of targeted design features can restore a full range of street functions to the study area and balance pedestrian and auto needs, while maintaining visual appeal. The plan identifies three types of corridors within the study area:

Tier A – principal pedestrian and visual corridor

Tier B – key visual corridor, but with limited pedestrian function

Tier C – secondary corridor with limited visual and pedestrian functions

Recommended streetscape elements vary by designation. In general, Tier A pedestrian-based corridors require the most design features, while Tier C corridors intended primarily for auto travel offer the fewest design amenities.

Tier A

- Roswell Street between Cobb Parkway and the Square

The design elements in the table below are appropriate for Tier A designated street corridors. These corridors are meant to accommodate pedestrian activity and visually connect key elements of the downtown.

Tier A Corridor Streetscaping Features

Pedestrian zone (from back of curb to building front) of 16 feet
Clear sidewalk zone of 6 feet adjacent to street and 2 feet of brick paver between the curb and sidewalk
Street tree/furniture zone of 8 feet between sidewalk and building front
Street furniture – benches, trash receptacles, bike racks
Street trees
Pedestrian lighting
Special accent paving
Buried utilities
Landscape plantings
Transit shelters

The plan designates Roswell Street as a Tier A corridor because it is the spine of the central city community. The street, which bisects the study area, is close to many stable residential areas. This corridor also links the Square, Cobb County government facilities, and the Cobb County library. Based on these features, the Master Plan envisions Roswell Street, particularly west of Fairground Street, as the signature visual and pedestrian corridor of the study



Pedestrian commercial areas have buildings close to the street and wide sidewalks.

Source: Land Use and Transportation Innovation, Reid Ewing

area. The road is heavily traveled by cars. But its narrow frame suggests opportunities to calm traffic and generate pedestrian activity.

The primary goals of the Roswell corridor streetscape are to: provide visual continuity to the Square; extend the pedestrian scale storefront experience of the Square; and increase pedestrian comfort through a sense of enclosure along the street. The plan recommends a full urban streetscape of pedestrian and visual corridor street features. To create visual continuity with the Square, the Roswell streetscape should incorporate many of the existing design elements in Glover Park, such as brick pavers and ornamental lighting.

Given Roswell Street's state road designation, the streetscape will not place design elements directly adjacent to the road. To maintain an appropriate clear zone, the plan recommends 2 feet of brick paver between the street and sidewalk, followed by a 6-foot sidewalk. An 8-foot street tree and furniture zone would then be placed between the sidewalk and the building fronts. Street trees and pedestrian elements must be behind the sidewalk and cannot interfere with sight distance.

Tier B

- Loop between Kennesaw Avenue south to Powder Springs Road
- Fairground Street between the Loop
- Atlanta Street from the Square to South Cobb Drive
- Powder Springs south to Garrison Road

The following design elements are appropriate for Tier B designated street corridors. These corridors have some important visual qualities, but traffic conditions are not conducive to pedestrian activity.

Tier B Corridor Streetscaping Features

Ornamental street lighting
Landscape plantings
Street trees in 8-foot planting strip
Sidewalks with 6-foot clearance zone
Transit shelters

The Loop Corridor Streetscape

This section of the Loop between Kennesaw Avenue south to Powder Springs Road connects the Square with several major land uses, including Brumby Hall, the Marietta Conference Center, and the cemetery. The Master Plan envisions the Loop corridor as a critical visual edge for the historic core, but a secondary pedestrian link. The Loop lacks the narrow skeleton of Roswell Street and its faster, heavier traffic volumes dampen pedestrian potential. The purpose of the Loop streetscape is to smooth the visual transition from key attractions south to the Square. Design amenities also create an environment that is compatible with existing historic character.

Fairground Street

Fairground Street serves as a vital interior north-south corridor for the study area. For motorists and pedestrians traveling west, the street also signals arrival into the central city. The purpose of this designated streetscape is to provide an appealing transition to downtown. To accentuate this transition, the plan recommends visual design elements along the entire length of the corridor with formal gateway opportunities described below.

Atlanta Street Corridor Streetscape

The Atlanta Street corridor is currently an auto-oriented street that follows the CSX rail line, running south from the Square. The Cobb County Department of Transportation will widen and redesign the corridor. The Master Plan envisions this street as a key visual link to the historic center of the city. The plan recommends visual design elements along the corridor for an improved transition to the Square. To support the corridor's transit function, the plan recommends benches and shelters for the portion of Atlanta Street served by CCT bus routes. The plan also suggests the use of design elements to enhance connection to the proposed Kennesaw to Chatahoochee multi-use recreation trail, which would parallel the road.

Powder Springs Road to Garrison Road Corridor Streetscape

Though this corridor is currently auto-oriented, there is also heavy pedestrian traffic. According to the plan, a redesigned portion of Powder Springs within the study area would fill gaps in the land use fabric between the Square, Conference Center, and a proposed center of redevelopment activity. Within this stretch of Powder Springs south to Garrison Road, the streetscape would place visual design elements.

Tier C

- Cobb Parkway between the Loop
- Powder Springs from Garrison Road to County Services Parkway

The following design elements are appropriate for Tier C designated street corridors. These corridors are designed primarily for auto traffic, but should accommodate some safe pedestrian movement.

Tier C Corridor Streetscaping Features

Landscape plantings
Sidewalks with 6-foot clearance zone
Transit shelters

Cobb Parkway Corridor

This corridor is heavily auto-oriented. Intense strip development, concrete medians, and large signs are visually dominant. Given the visual disorder of the corridor and commercial intensity, the plan recommends the most basic streetscape elements to mitigate negative aesthetic impacts.

“Experience shows that if you’re willing to accept the standard, cookie-cutter design, that’s what you’ll get.” Edward T. McMahon Have It Your Way: Fast Food Restaurant Design

Power Springs Road to County Services Parkway Corridor Streetscape

For the remainder of the Power Springs corridor from Garrison Road south to County Services Parkway, the plan recommends basic auto corridor design features, such as a landscaped median with groundcover and trees, to soften the harsh visual impacts of strip commercial activity. Design along this southern stretch of Powder Springs Road could also encourage redevelopment at underused or vacant commercial parcels south of the study area.

Action 1.2 Design Overlay of Corridors

Placing design elements in public spaces is not sufficient to create a special atmosphere in Marietta. Private investment must also play a role in developing buildings that add to local charm and character. Unfortunately, conventional zoning codes act ineffectively in guiding quality growth. Zoning is often restrictive with rigid yard requirements, buffers, and bulk regulations that promote design uniformity.

Overlay zones, however, can target key visual improvements along corridors that are prone to sprawl and unattractive strip development. Overlays add special features or conditions to the base zoning of a district. The guidelines within design overlays let the city assert control on the quality, as well as the quantity, of development. Guidelines provide a shared vocabulary for buildings in an area. Overlays encourage developers and regulators to look beyond the site-specific requirements of projects to the broader relationship between buildings, public spaces, and people. As a result, they help define how private activity can contribute to an enhanced community appearance.

Strong design can also attract quality growth to the downtown core. Design standards protect commercial investments by setting the development standards of surrounding properties at a uniformly high level. Additionally, guidelines that result in attractive projects can help reduce community

resistance to new development proposals, making the approval process less time-consuming and costly for both developers and regulators.

Corridors are sorted into two design overlay designations based on function.

Tier A – principal pedestrian and visual corridor

Tier B – key visual corridor, but with limited pedestrian function

Tier C corridor designations (Cobb Parkway and Powder Springs from Garrison to County Services Parkway) do not require any design guidelines for new commercial development.

Tier A

- Roswell Street between Cobb Parkway and the Square

According to community input and visioning, Marietta residents prefer streets with trees, landscaping, and sidewalk-oriented buildings with two to three stories of mixed uses. The general purpose of the Tier A design overlay is to encourage private development to display some of the basic features of a pedestrian-oriented downtown commercial corridor. Overlay conditions promote a continuous streetfront experience that engages the pedestrian and generates visual interest.¹



New commercial buildings should help maintain a continuous street front.
Source: Downtown Core Commercial and Mixed Use Standards, Davis, CA

Parking

Surface parking presents some of the most inhibiting barriers to pedestrian movement along corridors. To soften the effects of pervasive asphalt within the overlay, the plan recommends placing parking in the rear of buildings and providing basic landscaping and buffering of surface lots. The overlay proposes consolidation of vehicular access and more parking lot connections to lessen stop-and-go car traffic.

Site Layout

Buildings that are staggered or set far back from the sidewalk disrupt the pattern of the urban fabric. Design overlays restore rhythm and continuity by requiring developers to orient sites toward the public realm. The overlay brings buildings forward to the sidewalk. Buildings cannot be set back more than 16 feet from the back of the curb. Guidelines also improve the visibility and accessibility of entrances, encourage architectural detailing, and add pedestrian scale site furnishings. All of these features are intended to attract street level activity. The design overlay may exempt certain uses, such as auto service stations, for which pedestrian oriented guidelines may not be appropriate.

Drive-through facilities generally conflict with the pedestrian orientation of downtown commercial areas. The overlay should discourage drive-through access within these districts. But where permitted, drive-through facilities should be carefully designed to reduce conflicts with pedestrians.

Building Design

The purpose of these guidelines is to encourage architecture that respects local context and evokes a sense of place. The standards do not prescribe a particular architectural style. Instead, they identify basic elements—scale, massing, and materials—that tie the downtown buildings into a cohesive pattern and form a setting attractive to pedestrians. The purpose is to allow diversity within clear design boundaries.



New national franchises can blend into areas with traditional commercial architecture.

Source: Have It Your Way: Fast Food Restaurant Design, Edward T. McMahon

Pedestrian commercial streets generally consist of a variety of smaller scale retailers. These streets, however, can also accommodate larger corporate franchises without homogenizing the area's physical character. It is critical that the overlay zone maintains particular design standards even for franchise retailers that typically use generic, box building footprints. New franchises that blend their buildings into the local context can become a unique community asset.

Several options exist for more sensitive franchise design.ⁱⁱ National chains can reuse existing historic buildings. Chains can also vary from their conventional design formulas when developing a new building. Communities can use a range of tools to influence corporate designs, including architectural design review as described above, conditional permitting or direct appeals to developers. If met with resistance, local governments can grant incentives, such as increased floor/area ratios, increased height or lot coverage, relaxed setback requirements, and additional units in buildings in exchange for desirable designs.

In general, national retailers are willing modify design to gain access to strategic locations with economic potential. National experience suggests that tailoring a national chain to reflect local identity can actually generate increased sales.

Signs

Sign control is essential in pedestrian commercial districts. Conspicuous, out-of-scale signs greatly diminish the aesthetic appeal of an area. According to public input and community visioning, Marietta residents prefer monument signs that are of pedestrian scale and are made of natural materials, such as brick or wood.

Signs should be distinct and creative, but they must also be in proportion to the buildings. The plan recommends that the corridor design overlay set several basic guidelines for commercial signs. The overlay should ban pole signs in favor of individual monument signs. Where appropriate, multi-



Monument-style sign.



Signs can vary in style and design, yet blend with the street front.

tenant shopping centers should display signs in a larger single monument marker. Particularly along very pedestrian-oriented corridors with limited setbacks, such as Roswell Street, wall signs or projecting signs may be more appropriate. Overlays should allow one wall sign or projecting sign per business. Regulations should also limit signs to a scale proportionate to the building and promote use of traditional materials, such as metal or wood. The overlay should also prohibit the use of portable signs and banners, except for 30 days around the opening of a new business.

While these guidelines affect signs put in place by new businesses, many existing signs along Marietta's central corridors are non-conforming. Several measures can encourage replacement of non-conforming signs, including:

- providing a size bonus for a new sign if the old sign is removed by a certain date
- offering to remove the nonconforming sign without charge to the owner
- offering a cash incentive or a tax credit for the removal of nonconforming signs
- conditioning any rezonings, variances, or conditional use permits on the removal of nonconforming signs
- requiring the removal of nonconforming signs any time there is a change in the certificate of occupancy or business license for the premise

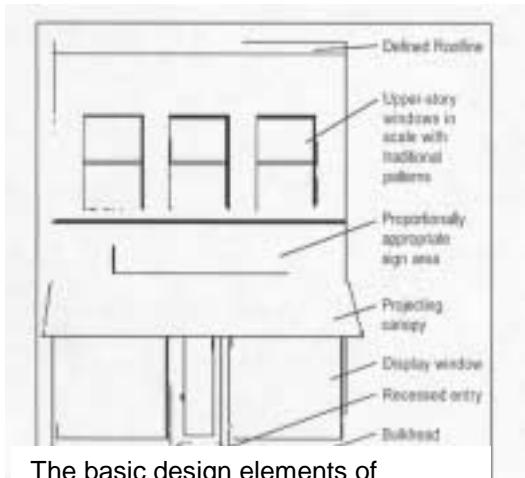
Stakeholder Quote:
"It's got to have a unique character that people want to visit and be around."

Tier A Corridor Design Guidelines

Guideline 1: Create a pedestrian oriented environment.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Fully align the building front at the sidewalk edge – this would equal a build-to line of 16 feet
2. If part of the building front must be set back from the sidewalk, treat these portions of the building as a plaza or courtyard (no more than 25% of the building should be designed in this way)
3. Use an awning, change in roofline, or other architectural feature to define the entry
4. Recess storefront entries
5. Primary entrances to ground floor spaces and upper stories should be oriented to the sidewalk and primary pedestrian ways
6. Corner buildings should be designed with angled entrances at the corner
7. Provide pedestrian level lighting at a height of ten (10) feet or less near building entryways



The basic design elements of downtown commercial structures.
Source: Downtown Core Commercial and Mixed Use Standards, Davis, CA



A new development with traditional architectural elements.

Guideline 2: New buildings should respect the quality architecture of Marietta.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

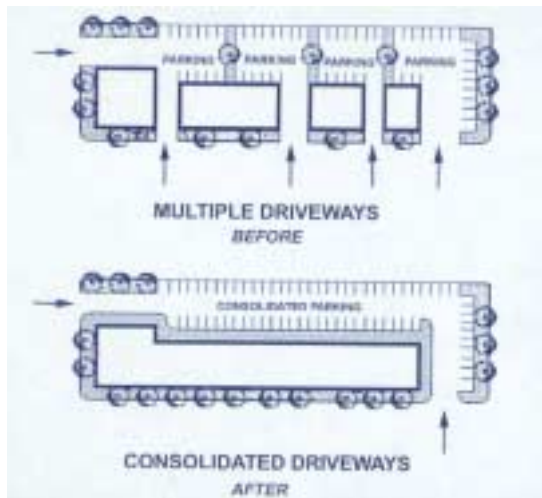
1. Buildings near the Square should blend in with the traditional pedestrian scale and help reinforce a continuous storefront experience; buildings that are near more intense nodes of activity or development may blend in compatibly with their surroundings at a higher scale
2. Building forms should be compatible with existing architecture; rectangular volumes are preferred; cylindrical, pyramidal, and similar building forms are generally less appropriate
3. Buildings should be innovative and distinctive in architectural character; buildings should reflect some of the traditional buildings elements of Main Street architecture, such as storefronts with display windows, bulkheads and transoms; an upper façade with wall material (brick, wood or stucco) and windows; and a decorative cornice made with wood moldings, pressed metal, terra cotta, brick, or similar materials to define rooflines
4. Parapet walls should be used for screening flat roofs
5. Use high quality, natural-looking materials on exposed exterior surfaces, such as brick, metal, stone, wood; artificial or industrial materials, such as aluminum, reflective or mirror glass are inappropriate
6. Use fabric (canvas) awnings or fixed metal canopies; vinyl awnings are inappropriate

Design Guideline 3: Create visual interest for pedestrians.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. The linear front of a building should incorporate pedestrian oriented elements, such as:
 - transparent display windows or display cases that cover 75% of the building front
 - outdoor dining areas
 - public art
 - canopies/awnings/trellises
 - landscaping, shade trees, and benches
2. First two stories should be delineated through change of materials, colors and/or canopies and awnings or fenestration; no blank walls at street level
3. Minimum building façade height at the street front of 18 feet
4. Use exterior building lighting to accentuate building design
5. Use upper-level decks, balconies, and rooftop gardens as private open space
6. Use the ground floor for retail, restaurants, cultural, and entertainment activities
7. Provide mixed uses (any combination of commercial, office or residential) in single project

8. Add one of following elements to street furniture/tree zone: landscape planting, street tree, bench, bike rack, trash receptacle, or pedestrian lighting
9. Provide an open space, such as a pocket park, courtyard, or open market area that is equal to at least 5% of the lot size; where appropriate coordinate open spaces between lots to maximize use



Consolidate driveway access to reduce traffic congestion.

Source: Neighborhood Commercial Guidelines, Atlanta, GA

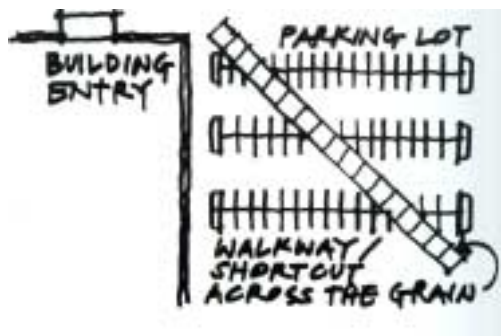
Design Guideline 4: Locate mechanical equipment and service areas out of public view.
The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Loading/service areas including refuse/recycling containers should be out of public view whenever feasible and must not front onto a primary street
2. Electrical and communication transformers/cabinets in the city right-of-way should be screened from public view through below grade installation, the use of hedges, or similar measures
3. All other mechanical equipment must be behind or on top of the building and screened from public view with parapet walls, landscaping, etc...

Design Guideline 5: Minimize the visual impact of auto access.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Enter into a shared parking agreement with an adjacent use
2. Reduce curb cuts to one per property; consolidate individual driveway access



Clearly marked cut-throughs make parking lots more pedestrian friendly.
Source: City Comforts, David Sucher

3. Place on-site parking behind the buildings at the ground level or completely above or below the first floor of a building
4. Access parking from the rear of the property, when feasible
5. Minimize driveway width
6. Plant one shade tree in the interior of on-site surface lots for every 10 parking spaces provided; planter islands should be a minimum of 125 square feet in area
7. Provide a 10 foot landscape buffer around the edge of parking lots; when parking lots abut, create a visual break between lots by placing a landscape buffer on alternating property lines
8. Provide organized circulation for pedestrians with a clear walkway that brings pedestrians to sidewalks and main entrances; the walkway should be delineated by non-asphalt material in a different color or texture than the parking areas or with plantings
9. Design drive-through facilities to minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflicts
10. Provide bike racks, benches or other street furniture to encourage alternative transportation use

Design Guideline 6: Provide signs that are appropriate for a downtown commercial area.
The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Use one pedestrian scale monument sign per business (6 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 20 square feet of sign face)

Stakeholder Quote:

“When it comes to Marietta they should have the feeling they are stepping into a place where the people have taken the best from all times and hung on to them.”

2. Multiple tenants should consider use of one larger monument sign for the development (9 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 100 square feet of sign face)
3. Use one wall sign per business (no more than 15% of wall area and designed not to obscure architectural details)
4. Use one projecting sign per business (no more than 20 square feet in sign face with a clearance of 8 feet above ground level)
5. When using lighting, signs should be externally lighted (as an alternative option signs may use internal lighting only with a dark background to reduce glare)
6. Signs should be constructed of traditional materials and display a high level of craftsmanship

Tier B

- Loop between Kennesaw Avenue south to Powder Springs Road
- Fairground Street between the Loop
- Atlanta Street
- Powder Springs south to Garrison Road

Tier B Corridor Design Guidelines

Tier B guidelines relax certain site design elements, such as parking and street orientation of building, because of the more auto-oriented function of the corridors.

Guideline 1: Create a pedestrian oriented environment.

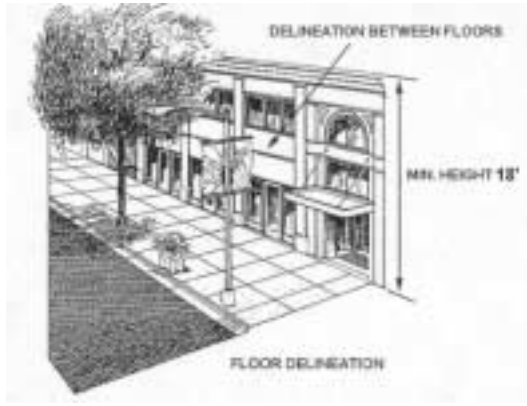
The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Bring buildings forward to a build-to line of 30 feet – buildings should be set back no more than 30 feet from the back of curb
2. If part of the building front must be set back from the build-to line, treat these portions of the building as a plaza or courtyard (no more than 50% of the building should be designed in this way)
3. Use an awning, change in roofline, or other architectural feature to define the entry
4. Recess storefront entries
5. Primary entrances to ground floor spaces and upper stories should be oriented to the sidewalk and primary pedestrian ways
6. Corner buildings should be designed with angled entrances at the corner
7. Provide pedestrian level lighting at a height of ten (10) feet or less near building entryways

Guideline 2: New buildings should respect the quality architecture of Marietta.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Buildings near the Square should blend in with the traditional pedestrian scale and help reinforce a continuous scale storefront experience; buildings that are near more intense nodes of activity or development may blend in compatibly with their surroundings at a higher scale
2. Building forms should be compatible with existing architecture; rectangular volumes are preferred; cylindrical, pyramidal, and similar building forms are generally less appropriate
3. Buildings should be innovative and distinctive in architectural character; buildings should reflect some of the traditional buildings elements of Main Street architecture, such as storefronts with display windows, bulkheads and transoms; an upper façade with wall material (brick, wood or stucco) and windows; and a decorative cornice made with wood moldings, pressed metal, terra cotta, brick, or similar materials to define rooflines
4. Parapet walls should be used for screening flat roofs
5. Use high quality, natural-looking materials on exposed exterior surfaces, such as brick, metal, stone, wood; artificial or industrial materials, such as aluminum, reflective or mirror glass are inappropriate
6. Use fabric (canvas) awnings or fixed metal canopies; vinyl awnings are inappropriate



Create street-level interest through a detailed human-scale façade.
Source: Neighborhood Commercial Guidelines, Atlanta, GA

Design Guideline 3: Create visual interest for pedestrians.

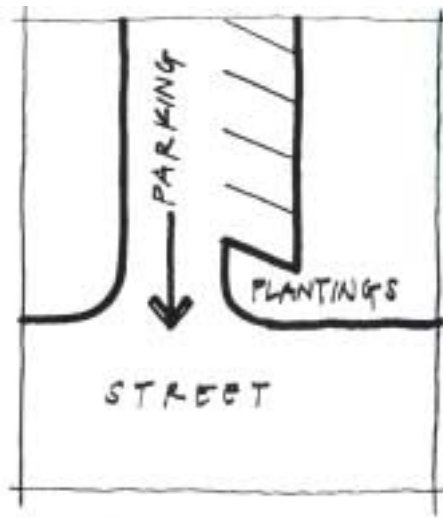
The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. The linear front of a building should incorporate pedestrian oriented elements, such as:
 - transparent display windows or display cases that cover 75% of the building front
 - outdoor dining areas
 - public art
 - canopies/awnings/trellises
 - landscaping, shade trees, and benches
2. First two stories should be delineated through change of materials, colors and/or canopies and awnings or fenestration; no blank walls at street level
3. Minimum building façade height at the street front of 18 feet
4. Use exterior building lighting to accentuate building design
5. Use upper-level decks, balconies, and rooftop gardens as private open space
6. Use the ground floor for retail, restaurants, cultural, and entertainment activities
7. Provide mixed uses (any combination of commercial, office or residential) in single project

8. Add one of following elements to street furniture/tree zone: landscape planting, street tree, bench, bike rack, trash receptacle, or pedestrian lighting
9. Provide an open space, such as a pocket park, courtyard, or open market area that is equal to at least 5% of the lot size; where appropriate coordinate open spaces between lots to maximize use

Design Guideline 4: Locate mechanical equipment and service areas out of public view.
The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Loading/service areas including refuse/recycling containers should be out of public view when ever feasible and must not front onto a primary street
2. Electrical and communication transformers/cabinets in the city right-of-way should be screened from public view through below grade installation, the use of hedges, or similar measures
3. All other mechanical equipment must be behind or on top of the building and screened from public view with parapet walls, landscaping, etc...



Visually and physically narrow driveway width through design and landscaping, thereby reducing pedestrian barriers.
Source: City Comforts, David Sucher

Design Guideline 5: Minimize the visual impact of auto access.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Enter into a shared parking agreement with an adjacent use
2. Reduce curb cuts to one per property; consolidate individual driveway access
3. Place 75% on-site parking behind or to the side of the buildings at the ground level or above or below the first floor of a building; any parking facing the primary street should be screened with hedges, berms, or other landscaping techniques
4. Access parking from the rear of the property, when feasible
5. Minimize driveway width
6. Plant one shade tree in the interior of on-site surface lots for every 10 parking spaces provided; planter islands should be a minimum of 125 square feet in area
7. Provide a 10 foot landscape buffer around the edge of parking lots; when parking lots abut, create a visual break between lots by placing a landscape buffer on alternating property lines
8. Provide organized circulation for pedestrians with a clear walkway that brings pedestrians to sidewalks and main entrances; the walkway should be delineated by non-asphalt material in a different color or texture than the parking areas or with plantings
9. Design drive-through facilities to minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflicts
10. Provide bike racks, benches or other street furniture to encourage alternative transportation use

Design Guideline 6: Provide signs that are appropriate for a downtown commercial area. The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Use one monument sign per business (9 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 25 square feet of sign face)
2. Multiple tenants should consider use of one larger monument sign for the development (12 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 125 square feet of sign face)
3. When using lighting, signs should be externally lighted (as an alternative option signs may use internal lighting only with a dark background to reduce glare)
4. Signs should be constructed of traditional materials and display a high level of craftsmanship

Design Overlay Implementation

To ensure effective implementation, guidelines must be clear, but flexible. The design process should also be adequately supported by city staff and economic development resources, as well as the general community.ⁱⁱⁱ Rigidity can promote monotony of design, while vague guidelines can make interpretation and enforcement difficult. The plan recommends that the guidelines specifically identify a set of high priority characteristics that reflect Marietta's vision—examples may be bringing buildings to the sidewalk, having small signs, and using high-quality, natural-looking building materials—and require conformance with these design features. The city should also allow for a looser application of less essential design principles by providing multiple options.

The city can use a review process that assigns a point value to each possible design option. Applications will then be required to accumulate a minimum number of points to secure approval. The purpose of the scoring system is to ensure that developers have flexibility, but also exceed a threshold of design quality.

Planning staff should play a crucial role in the interpretation of the design guidelines, working very closely with developers before the application stage. Staff will review development applications for conformance with design guidelines. The city should use graphics and images to illustrate guidelines. Illustrations can include photographs, drawings, and before and after examples. The key is that a design document should have clear visual representations of how the guidelines look when applied. The review process should be strengthened by a strong educational component that informs the public about the considerable economic benefits of good urban design. City council will review any appeal and have the ability to grant variances to any guideline provided that an acceptable alternate design is found.

Most existing commercial buildings within the designated design overlays will not initially conform to the guidelines. The plan envisions the revitalization process as evolutionary, improving the physical appearance of the study area one building at a time. The purpose of the strategy is to have the guidelines in place so that quality development will emerge over the next 10 to 20 years. The city can facilitate this transformation by tying physical redevelopment to economic incentives. Strategy 4 more fully explores these economic based approaches.

Action 1.3 Gateways/Street Specific Treatments

Gateway elements act as place-makers.^{iv} Entries create a sense of arrival into special areas of the community, such as historic streets, commercial corridors, and public gathering spaces. The plan identifies two types of gateways.

Primary gateways are designated for key entryways that signal transition into the historic core of the city. Gateways will include a monument style sign with natural materials, such as wood or brick, and native plantings.

Secondary gateways are designated for auto-oriented corridors. These gateways will include directional, information signs with less architectural detail than primary gateways. The gateways should have common design elements to establish a unified theme within the downtown. Signs may be accompanied by small landscape plantings.

Roswell Street

- primary gateway at Roswell and Fairground Streets

The highly visible intersection of Roswell and Fairground Streets signals arrival at the historic core of the study area. To highlight this entry, the plan recommends a monument style gateway with natural materials, such as wood, and native plantings.

Fairground Street

- secondary gateways at intersection with North Marietta Parkway and South Loop
- landscaped median near Lawrence Street and Washington Avenue

In addition to gateways, the plan recommends the addition of a landscaped median to the northern portion of the corridor near the intersections of Lawrence Street and Washington Avenue. Fairground Street, particularly between North Marietta Parkway and Roswell Street, is moderately developed and near many stable neighborhoods. The street width and large setbacks, however, form a barrier between neighborhoods to the east and west. The median would produce a visual narrowing of the road and reduce the existing physical disconnection between neighborhoods.

Atlanta Street

- primary gateway at Atlanta Street and South Cobb Parkway
- secondary gateway at Atlanta Street and the Loop
- benches and shelters by CCT bus routes

Cobb Parkway

- secondary gateways at North Loop, Roswell Street, and the South Loop

Action 1.4 Corridor Land Use Management

Land use/zoning strategies recommended for Tier A and B overlay designations.

Land Use Strategies for Overlay Areas

Side Yard Lines	permit development to have zero lot lines or be set back a minimum of 5 feet from the side lot line
Mixed Uses	permit mixed uses by right on a single lot or development
Use Conditions	make more intense uses (auto sales and repair, service stations) conditional, rather than by-right, to ensure a review of their design compatibility with residential areas
Parking	permit on-street parking, when feasible, to act as a traffic calming device
Parking	reduce required on-site parking spaces by 20%

Along with the improved appearance of commercial development, the city should encourage a varied land use mix by permitting both residential and commercial uses on a single lot or project within designated districts. Conditional permitting of certain intense commercial activities, such as auto sales and repair, within the overlays can be used to require special design features or buffers that limit impacts on nearby residential areas.

Since zoning often requires parking spaces to meet peak use, rather than normal business operation, the overlay also suggests a modest reduction in required on-site parking to reinforce pedestrian orientations. When feasible, on-street parking can be used as a traffic-calming device.

Action 1.5 East-West Traffic Study

The streetscaping and design overlay components of the Master Plan are intended to create a more walkable environment along Marietta's central corridors, particularly Roswell Street. A pedestrian friendly design requires traffic calming and a diversion of some portion of the heavy east-west traffic volume that currently cuts through the Roswell corridor.

It is beyond the scope of this plan process to study traffic movements or recommend roadway infrastructure improvements outside of the specified study area boundaries. However, the plan does recommend further analysis of the east-west traffic flow issue. Growth in areas west of Marietta will continue to strain the corridor capacity and may undermine efforts to create a pedestrian orientation within the central city area.

Strategy 2: Activity Centers

The organizing focal points of cities are centers—special areas that attract a diverse mix of people and activities. Centers provide community gathering places, business and entertainment opportunities, government services, and housing. These centers physically link the people who live, work, and visit a community. Successful activity centers share certain design and land use characteristics. They have:

- convenient access
- internal pedestrian orientation and scale
- diverse, compatible land use mix
- higher residential densities

Stakeholder Quotes:

“an 18-24 hour activity center”

“we have a heart”

Stakeholder Quote:
"When people say 'I'm going downtown', I want them to mean Marietta."

- active public spaces
- design identity

Well-designed centers are so appealing because they combine the best qualities of the city with the charm of a smaller town.^v Centers provide the diversity, interest, and economic vitality of a larger city. But, they are physically laid out to offset the negative qualities of crowding and anonymity typically associated with city life. Because centers stress the functional relationship between people, buildings, and spaces, they have a level of comfort and convenience that can be greater than lower density suburban developments.

Marietta boasts one of the most recognizable centers in the Atlanta region. Residents cherish the Square because of the sense of place and distinct identity that it gives to the city. The Master Plan recommends measures to improve and expand upon this focal point.

Action 2.1 Enhance the Square

Design Elements

Glover Park and the Square feature a comfortable open space, attractive design elements, and the traditional commercial architecture that Marietta residents prefer. Maintaining the Square's character is an essential part of any downtown revitalization strategy. The plan recommends several design measures to enhance the Square's physical identity and use:

- replace existing street pole lighting with ornamental lights

- place additional street furniture along Square sidewalks and in underused interior spaces
- add a central kiosk to display information
- enhance wayfinding signs for Square attractions, such as the Welcome center and the Historical Museum
- add or identify public restroom facilities that are readily visible and accessible to pedestrians

Residential Uses

Currently, the Square functions as an 8- to 10-hour activity center. Government workers, jurors, and shoppers use the Square during the day, but this activity tapers at night. The Master Plan envisions the town Square as an 18-hour center, offering residential uses and a more diverse range of evening entertainment options.

To expand its overall function, the plan recommends increasing the number of people living on or near the Square. An increased residential base contributes to the vitality of the area. More households also boost the aggregate purchasing power necessary to attract and sustain new neighborhood businesses.

One of the great assets of downtown Marietta is the stock of architecturally interesting buildings. Since the Square is already built out, the city should explore opportunities to convert existing buildings into housing units, including the residential use of upper levels of structures. A particularly effective conversion of older commercial or industrial buildings is the live-work unit, intended for use by artists, writers, or other professionals. Though building and fire codes can often block the adaptive reuse of older buildings,



Alleys can be converted into more active spaces.
Source: David Sucher

Marietta's current codes should not act as a major deterrent to downtown residential conversions.

Public Spaces

Though Glover Park is active, many other public spaces around the Square see little street activity and pedestrian use, particularly in the interior alleyways of the Square, such as Depot Street, McNeel Alley, Root Street and Winters Street, the walkway that parallels the rail line, and sidewalks around the Square. The plan recommends the following actions to increase use of these unique and attractive spaces:

- place street furniture, such as benches, along the public sidewalks ringing Glover Park
- encourage additional outdoor dining along the public sidewalk and in interior spaces of the Square, especially along Dept Street and the area near the Welcome Center
- assess the possibility of converting existing surface parking spaces, such as those adjacent to Marietta Station, and underused spaces near the Square into active open spaces for people, rather than cars
- add ground floor retail uses to office buildings around the Square to generate more shopper interest, particularly along Depot Street



Improved access from the west can increase pedestrian traffic at the Square.

Access

Currently, the Loop and CSX rail line hinder pedestrian and bicycle access to the Square. The Depot Street area is blocked with fencing and the lack of convenient access has reduced street level activity and restaurant uses in the area near the Marietta Welcome Center.

The plan recommends enhanced connectivity by opening additional crosswalks to the Square from the west. The city should explore opportunities for a grade elevated crossing, particularly at Mill Street or Depot Street. Well-designed crossings could increase the visibility of Square amenities and attractions, such as the Marietta Welcome Center, and generate increased pedestrian traffic for businesses. The plan also recommends a linking of the proposed pedestrian crossing over the North Loop to the walkway along the rail line.



Activity should be clustered near intersections to create focal points.
Source: 10 Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips, Urban Land Institute

Action 2.2 Create Other Activity Centers

The current zoning ordinance permits mixed use activity in the central business district (CBD), which includes the historic Square and the immediate vicinity. Given the architecture in the area, the district regulations do not require the generous setbacks and landscape buffers common in other commercial zonings.

According to public input and the community visioning survey, residents support developments that are about two to three stories in height and offer commercial uses at the street level and residential and office uses above. Unfortunately, conventional zoning regulations inhibit urban infill and produce generic development that disrupts the character and charm of the central city. The purpose of the activity centers strategy is to reintroduce flexibility into development regulations so that the traditional, human-scale urban form of the Square can be built in other areas.

As noted in the existing conditions section, central city Marietta offers a fine grain of land uses, including stable institutional and community-oriented activities. The plan recommends building on this pattern to create additional mixed use centers outside of the Square. Activity centers should be roughly a minimum of 8 to 10 acres with multiple land uses, higher than average residential densities within a quarter mile radius, and a variety of housing types. Centers should have a strong pedestrian orientation with sidewalk connections to nearby neighborhoods, enabling residents to walk to shopping, recreation, and transportation.

Key intersections, major transit stops, and community facilities create unique points of reference. These nodes can be treated as a form of "instant Square"—readily identifiable centers that create places within the study area.

Activity centers are intended for the most intensive retail, residential, and entertainment uses. Design guidelines for private development in these areas

are similar to corridor overlays, but stress additional density, connectivity, and open space provisions. According to public input and community visioning, Marietta residents prefer mixed use commercial areas with designs conducive to pedestrian movement. The purpose of this strategy is to recapture the comfortable, inviting atmosphere of a village commercial district.

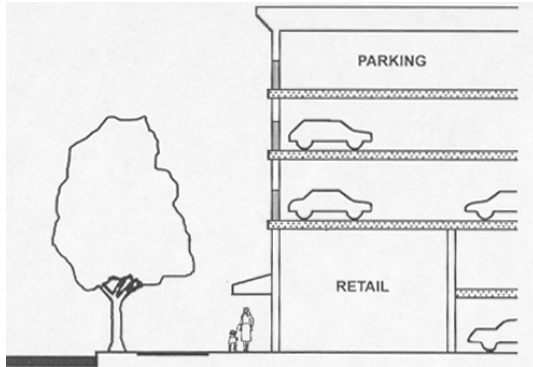
Activity center areas are classified into two tiers. Tier A centers, which reflect the traditional grid pattern of the downtown core, are the most pedestrian friendly and the most compact. Tier B guidelines are for activity centers served by more auto oriented corridors.

Tier A Centers

- area to the immediate south of the traditional central business district
- the intersection of Roswell Street and Fairground Street

CBD South Center

Given its proximity to the Square, the plan envisions development at this activity center as a top priority of the revitalization process. The center would add mixed uses and traditional architecture to the area south of the existing CBD. The center designation would expand the urban grid and enhance the physical qualities of transitional areas where incompatible development currently erodes the historic edge.



Parking decks designed like buildings and having ground floor retail can blend compatibly with surrounding areas.

Source: Neighborhood Commercial Guidelines, Atlanta, GA

Roswell and Fairground Street Center

This node would divide the existing strip corridor into walkable segments and would establish an active center at a key gateway. The center would also increase pedestrian activity near several community-oriented uses, such as the Cobb County Civic Center and the Cobb County library.

Access

Activity centers should offer easy access to pedestrians and bicyclists. The plan recommends the continued implementation of the Kennessaw to Chattahoochee trail and other proposed bike and trail facilities as a means to connect centers to neighborhoods. When resurfacing streets, the city should also explore opportunities to re-stripe for bicycle friendly roads and place bike racks within activity centers.

Density

The purpose of activity centers is to designate appropriate parts of the study area for integrated, compact development. Land use, particularly in the downtown, should avoid continuous commercial zoning along arterials and instead create people-oriented nodes.^{vi} Zoning should break streets into walkable segments by alternating more intense commercial activity with less intense non-commercial uses. This strategy creates a corridor with varied focal points, rather than a string of low intensity uses.

Parking

According to public input and community visioning, Marietta residents view discreetly designed parking structures as appropriate for the downtown area. To accommodate a pedestrian scale environment within activity centers, people must have places to park their cars. The plan recommends the use of strategically placed parking decks near activity centers and along the proposed shuttle circulation route. The plan should require parking decks to conceal automobiles from visibility, design the outside deck façade to resemble a storied building, and add ground level retail, if possible.

Residential Uses

The most common residential zoning category in the study area is R-4. This classification requires a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet, a minimum lot width of 75 feet, a minimum floor area of 1,200 square feet, front setbacks of 35 or 25 feet based on street designation, a rear setback of 30 feet, and side setbacks of 25 or 10 feet based on street designation. The maximum density is 4 dwelling units per acre.

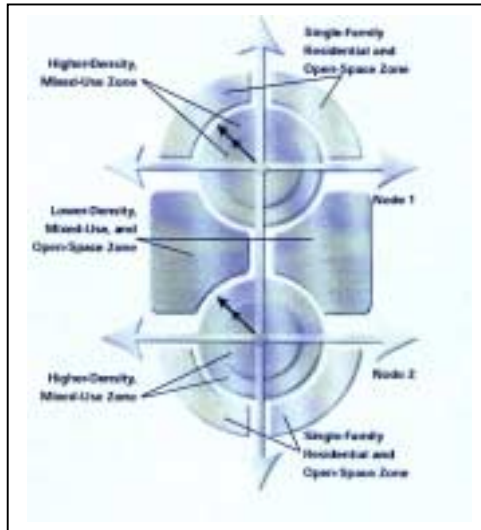
Current residential standards promote housing development that is more typical of suburban areas. There is evidence of increasing interest for housing in smaller niche markets. A growing number of households with singles, working parents and single parents, and “empty-nesters” indicates potential demand for higher density, infill housing close to services, jobs, and transit. Conventional low-density residential zoning, however, can interfere with these emerging demographic forces and stunt downtown residential growth.

The city’s land use regulations must strongly support downtown residential uses. Added zoning flexibility would promote more diverse and affordable housing and allow developers to make profitable use of the smaller lots common in the central city.

Since the study area is largely built out, current zoning most strongly influences redevelopment patterns. Zoning changes would not affect existing residential uses. But refining permitted density in appropriate activity centers can encourage in-fill that is traditional in character and pedestrian in feel. Policies should focus on directing density to activity centers and adjacent areas by:

- increasing permitted residential density
- reducing residential zoning requirements to allow for alternative, in-fill housing

Activity centers should accommodate a range of unit sizes, types, and lot designs. Generally, centers should have a minimum average density of about



Varying density within and near centers creates a mix of uses and reduces incompatibilities.

Source: 10 Principles for Reinventing America's Suburban Strips, Urban Land Institute

10 to 12 dwelling units per acre for a critical mass of people and activities. Density can be tiered to reduce conflict with surrounding uses. For example, multi-family developments near transit and neighborhood-serving uses within the commercial core should have a higher than average density. Intensity, however, should step down toward surrounding single family areas to create a compatible transition.

Community opposition to higher residential density tends to increase in proportion to the size of the proposed project. However, it is the design and layout of large scale developments, rather than density itself, that often detract from the character of surrounding areas. When compact projects are enhanced with a variety of amenities, such as outdoor spaces, ground floor retail, and architectural detailing they can complement nearby uses and fill gaps in the urban context.

The plan also recommends that the city and Marietta Housing Authority explore opportunities to create mixed income housing in activity centers. In contrast to traditional public housing strategies that concentrate lower income residents in specific areas, this approach blends subsidized and market rate units into a single development. The mixed income approach more fully integrates low-income residents into the mainstream of community life.

Public Spaces

Activity centers should create defined spaces for courtyards, markets, public art, and outdoor dining.

Tier A Center Design Guidelines

Guideline 1: Create a pedestrian oriented environment.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.



Entrances should address the street.

1. Fully align the building front at the sidewalk edge – this would equal a build-to line of 20 feet
2. If part of the building front must be set back from the sidewalk, treat these portions of the building as a plaza or courtyard (no more than 25% of the building should be designed in this way)
3. Minimize the perceived scale of a building by using design elements or stepping down building height toward the street and neighboring smaller structures
4. Provide a one story porch or similar element to define a front door or entrance and be oriented to the street
5. Use an awning, change in roofline, or other architectural feature to define the entry
6. Recess storefront entries
7. Primary entrances to ground floor spaces and upper stories should be oriented to the sidewalk and primary pedestrian ways
8. Corner buildings should be designed with angled entrances at the corner
9. Provide pedestrian level lighting at a height of ten (10) feet or less near building entryways

Guideline 2: New buildings should respect the quality architecture of Marietta.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Buildings should be of a scale to support the increased development concentration of the activity center; building scale should blend compatibly with the surrounding area
2. Building forms should be compatible with existing architecture; rectangular volumes are preferred; cylindrical, pyramidal, and similar building forms are generally less appropriate
3. Buildings should be innovative and distinctive in architectural character; buildings should reflect some of the traditional buildings elements of Main Street architecture, such as storefronts with display windows, bulkheads and transoms; an upper façade with wall material (brick, wood or stucco) and windows; and a decorative cornice made with wood moldings, pressed metal, terra cotta, brick, or similar materials
4. Parapet walls should be used for screening flat roofs
5. Use high quality, natural-looking materials on exposed exterior surfaces, such as brick, metal, stone, wood; artificial or industrial materials, such as aluminum, reflective or mirror glass are inappropriate
6. Use fabric (canvas) awnings or fixed metal canopies; vinyl awnings are inappropriate

Design Guideline 3: Create visual interest for pedestrians.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. The linear front of a building should incorporate pedestrian oriented elements, such as:

- transparent display windows or display cases that cover 75% of the building front
 - outdoor dining areas
 - public art
 - canopies/awnings/trellises
 - landscaping, shade trees, and benches
2. First two stories should be delineated through change of materials, colors and/or canopies and awnings or fenestration; no blank walls at street level
 3. Minimum building façade height at the street front of 18 feet
 4. Use exterior building lighting to accentuate building design
 5. Use upper-level decks, balconies, and rooftop gardens as private open space
 6. Use the ground floor for retail, restaurants, cultural, and entertainment activities
 7. Provide mixed uses (any combination of commercial, office or residential) in single project
 8. Add one of following elements to street furniture/tree zone: landscape planting, street tree, bench, bike rack, trash receptacle, or pedestrian lighting
 9. Provide an open space that is equal to at least 5% of the lot size; (open space is all of the land not devoted to building, parking structures, paved streets and parking lot area landscaping improvements; this may include

courtyards, outdoor dining areas, pocket parks, plazas and landscaped exterior spaces); where appropriate coordinate open spaces between lots to maximize use

Design Guideline 4: Locate mechanical equipment and service areas out of public view.

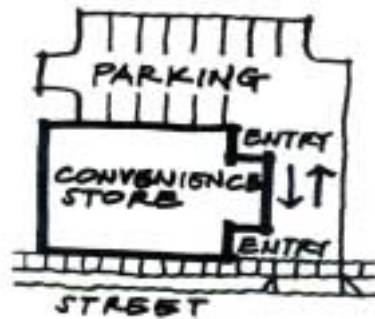
The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Loading/service areas including refuse/recycling containers should be out of public view when ever feasible and must not front onto a primary street
2. Electrical and communication transformers/cabinets in the city right-of-way should be screened from public view through below grade installation, the use of hedges, or similar measures
3. All other mechanical equipment must be behind or on top of the building and screened from public view with parapet walls, landscaping, etc...

Design Guideline 5: Minimize the visual impact of auto access.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Enter into a shared parking agreement with an adjacent use
2. Reduce curb cuts to one per property; consolidate individual driveway access
3. Place on-site parking behind the buildings at the ground level or completely above or below the first floor of a building



Putting parking behind buildings protects pedestrian activity at the street front.

Source: City Comforts, David Sucher

4. Access parking from the rear of the property, when feasible
5. Minimize driveway width
6. Plant one shade tree in the interior of on-site surface lots for every 10 parking spaces provided; planter islands should be a minimum of 125 square feet in area
7. Provide a 10 foot landscape buffer around the edge of parking lots; when parking lots abut, create a visual break between lots by placing a landscape buffer on alternating property lines
8. Provide organized circulation for pedestrians with a clear walkway that brings pedestrians to sidewalks and main entrances; the walkway should be delineated by non-asphalt material in a different color or texture than the parking areas or with plantings
9. Design drive-through facilities to minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflicts
10. Provide bike racks, benches or other street furniture to encourage alternative transportation use

Design Guideline 6: Provide signs that are appropriate for a downtown commercial area. The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Use one pedestrian scale monument signs with natural materials (6 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 20 square feet of sign face)
2. Multiple tenants should consider use of one larger monument sign for the development (9 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 100 square feet of sign face)

3. Use one wall sign with appropriate materials (no more than 15% of wall area and designed not to obscure architectural details)
4. Use one projecting sign with appropriate materials (no more than 20 square feet in sign face with a clearance of 8 feet above ground level)
5. All signs must be externally lighted (as an alternative option signs may use internal lighting only with a dark background to reduce glare)
6. Signs should be constructed of traditional materials and display a high level of craftsmanship

Design Guideline 7: Create an identifiable center boundary.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

Incorporate common design elements to establish a unified theme throughout the center. Examples may include:

- banners
- paving accents
- entryways
- lighting
- street furniture

Tier B Centers

- the area near the intersection of the South Loop and Powder Springs Road
- the area on the South Loop across from the Cobb County Transfer Terminal

Loop and Powder Springs Center

This center designates areas of proposed redevelopment adjacent to the Conference Center and in areas east where there are pockets of substandard housing. The node would cohere an area with key attractions and form a mixed use link to a redesigned Atlanta Street leading into the Square.

South Marietta Parkway

This area already has some of the elements of a mixed use node, including the Cobb County Transfer Terminal, multi-family housing, public housing, Southern Poly Tech University, and retail. Shopping strips along South Marietta Parkway, however, are generally underused and surrounded by excessive surface parking. With retrofitting strategies, centers, such as Clay Plaza and Parkway Plaza on the south Loop, can intensify land uses and fill in the urban fabric of the area.

Tier B Center Design Guidelines

Tier B guidelines relax certain site design elements, such as parking and street orientation of building, because of the more auto-oriented function of the center corridors.

Guideline 1: Create a pedestrian oriented environment.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Bring buildings forward to a build-to line of 30 feet – buildings should be set back no more than 30 feet from the back of curb
2. If part of the building front must be set back from the build-to line, treat these portions of the building as a plaza or courtyard (no more than 50% of the building should be designed in this way)
3. Minimize the perceived scale of a building by using design elements or stepping down building height toward the street and neighboring smaller structures
4. Provide a one story porch or similar element to define a front door or entrance and be oriented to the street
5. Use an awning, change in roofline, or other architectural feature to define the entry
6. Recess storefront entries
7. Primary entrances to ground floor spaces and upper stories should be oriented to the sidewalk and primary pedestrian ways
8. Corner buildings should be designed with angled entrances at the corner
9. Provide pedestrian level lighting at a height of ten (10) feet or less near building entryways

Guideline 2: New buildings should respect the quality architecture of Marietta.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Buildings should be of a scale to support the increased development concentration of the activity center; building scale should blend compatibly with the surrounding area
2. Building forms should be compatible with existing architecture; rectangular volumes are preferred; cylindrical, pyramidal, and similar building forms are generally less appropriate
3. Buildings should be innovative and distinctive in architectural character; buildings should reflect some of the traditional buildings elements of Main Street architecture, such as storefronts with display windows, bulkheads and transoms; an upper façade with wall material (brick, wood or stucco) and windows; and a decorative cornice made with wood moldings, pressed metal, terra cotta, brick, or similar materials
4. Parapet walls should be used for screening flat roofs
5. Use high quality, natural-looking materials on exposed exterior surfaces, such as brick, metal, stone, wood; artificial or industrial materials, such as aluminum, reflective or mirror glass are inappropriate
6. Use fabric (canvas) awnings or fixed metal canopies; vinyl awnings are inappropriate

Design Guideline 3: Create visual interest for pedestrians.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. The linear front of a building should incorporate pedestrian oriented elements, such as:
 - transparent display windows or display cases that cover 75% of the building front
 - outdoor dining areas
 - public art
 - canopies/awnings/trellises
 - landscaping, shade trees, and benches
2. First two stories should be delineated through change of materials, colors and/or canopies and awnings or fenestration; no blank walls at street level
3. Minimum building façade height at the street front of 18 feet
4. Use exterior building lighting to accentuate building design
5. Use upper-level decks, balconies, and rooftop gardens as private open space
6. Use the ground floor for retail, restaurants, cultural, and entertainment activities
7. Provide mixed uses (any combination of commercial, office or residential) in single project

8. Add one of following elements to street furniture/tree zone: landscape planting, street tree, bench, bike rack, trash receptacle, or pedestrian lighting
9. Provide an open space that is equal to at least 5% of the lot size; (open space is all of the land not devoted to building, parking structures, paved streets and parking lot area landscaping improvements; this may include courtyards, outdoor dining areas, pocket parks, plazas and landscaped exterior spaces); where appropriate coordinate open spaces between lots to maximize use

Design Guideline 4: Locate mechanical equipment and service areas out of public view.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Loading/service areas including refuse/recycling containers should be out of public view when ever feasible and must not front onto a primary street
2. Electrical and communication transformers/cabinets in the city right-of-way should be screened from public view through below grade installation, the use of hedges, or similar measures
3. All other mechanical equipment must be behind or on top of the building and screened from public view with parapet walls, landscaping, etc...

Design Guideline 5: Minimize the visual impact of auto access.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Enter into a shared parking agreement with an adjacent use

2. Reduce curb cuts to one per property; consolidate individual driveway access
3. Place 75% on-site parking behind or to the side of the buildings at the ground level or above or below the first floor of a building; any parking facing the primary street should be screened with hedges, berms, or other landscaping techniques
4. Access parking from the rear of the property, when feasible
5. Minimize driveway width
6. Plant one shade tree in the interior of on-site surface lots for every 10 parking spaces provided; planter islands should be a minimum of 125 square feet in area
7. Provide a 10 foot landscape buffer around the edge of parking lots; when parking lots abut, create a visual break between lots by placing a landscape buffer on alternating property lines
8. Provide organized circulation for pedestrians with a clear walkway that brings pedestrians to sidewalks and main entrances; the walkway should be delineated by non-asphalt material in a different color or texture than the parking areas or with plantings
9. Design drive-through facilities to minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflicts
10. Provide bike racks, benches or other street furniture to encourage alternative transportation use

Design Guideline 6: Provide signs that are appropriate for a downtown commercial area.
The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

1. Use one monument sign per business (9 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 25 square feet of sign face)
2. Multiple tenants should consider use of one larger monument sign for the development (12 foot maximum from ground to the top of sign support; maximum 125 square feet of sign face)
3. All signs must be externally lighted (as an alternative option signs may use internal lighting only with a dark background to reduce glare)
4. Signs should be constructed of traditional materials and display a high level of craftsmanship

Design Guideline 7: Create an identifiable center boundary.

The following are examples of design techniques that may be used to meet this guideline.

Incorporate common design elements to establish a unified theme throughout the center. Examples may include:

- banners
- paving accents
- entryways
- lighting
- street furniture



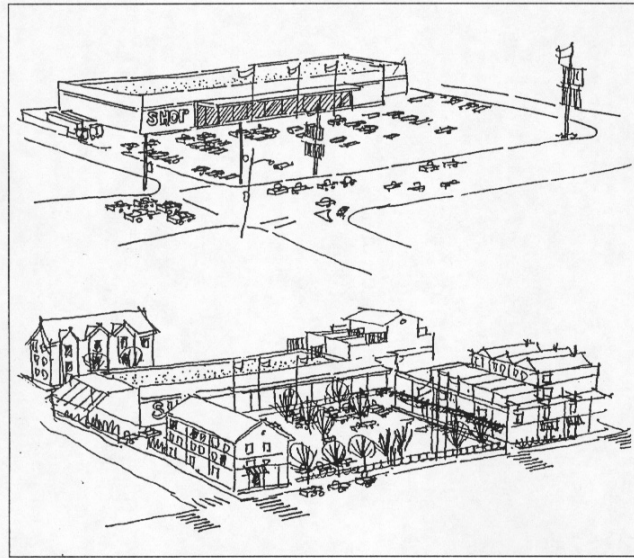
Accessory dwellings can add density without disrupting the existing character of an area.

Action 2.3 Land Use Management in Activity Centers

Land use strategies recommended for Tier A and B activity centers.

Land Use Strategies for Activity Centers

Function	Recommendation
Density	increase permitted residential density to create a critical mass of people and activities
Alternative Housing	encourage adaptive reuse of existing commercial or industrial buildings for residential use
Alternative Housing	reduce permitted minimum lot size to 5,000 square feet; minimum width of 20 feet and 70 feet in depth; setback of 15 feet from ROW; side units may have a setback of zero from the property line; minimum 15 foot rear setback
Alternative Housing	permit single family detached and attached single family dwellings (townhomes, rowhouses); permit accessory dwelling units
Transportation	blend transit facilities into the centers
Side Yard Lines	permit development to have zero lot lines or be set back a minimum of 5 feet from the side lot line
Mixed Uses	permit mixed uses by right on a single lot or development
Use Conditions	make more intense uses (auto sales and repair, service stations) conditional, rather than by-right, to ensure a review of their compatibility with residential areas



Retrofit strip centers with corner buildings, second floor uses, housing and landscaping
Source: Centering Suburbs, Richard Untermaier

Parking	permit on-street parking, when feasible, to act as a traffic calming device
Parking	reduce required on-site parking spaces by 20%

Action 2.4 Redesign Shopping Centers

Conventional shopping malls and strip centers are often inconsistent with the pedestrian focus of the traditional downtown shopping district. The accentuated setbacks surrounded by extensive surface parking only accommodate auto access. These stores also tend to be linear with no external focus.

Intense retail competition and increasing commercial suburbanization leave many strip retail developments obsolete. Central Marietta has a number of currently vacant or underused shopping centers that create major gaps in the urban fabric. The city can promote a number of design strategies to transform outdated strip retail into more pedestrian friendly centers that anchor the community^{vii}:

- maximize public transportation and pedestrian access to the site with bus shelters, shuttle links, and organized pedestrian walkways.
- increase the shopping center's density with added levels of retail, and cluster new buildings in existing parking lots and corners with offices or housing
- change the mix of available services to include educational, government, and cultural activities, such as museums, a "mini city hall," police substation or library

- retrofit existing lots with sidewalks, landscaping, internal and mid-block crosswalks, and covered walkways to be more pedestrian-friendly; any new parking lots should be located on the sides and behind buildings, with retail close to the street
- use wide sidewalks, landscaping, art, and seating for outdoor gathering areas
- celebrate the diversity of nearby neighborhoods with ethnic vendors, art displays and city-sponsored gatherings
- add residential uses to centers; non-traditional-households—young, elderly, low-income—benefit from convenient access to public goods and retail services

Action 2.5 Special Civic Uses

A healthy downtown represents the collective identity of the community. The traditional core should act as the heart of public, cultural, and entertainment activities. The following strategies can be used to strengthen downtown Marietta's role as the center of the city, as well as Cobb County:

- reserve prominent sites in the study area for special civic buildings, such as schools, government centers, post offices, and museums
- consider opportunities for public art throughout the downtown to enhance pedestrian feel and create a distinct design identity
- strengthen entertainment and cultural opportunities in the downtown, including possible creation of a performance arts center

Action 2.6 Enhance Transportation Connections between Centers

According to community input and public visioning, Marietta residents prefer an internal shuttle system to enhance circulation throughout the downtown area. The Master Plan proposes two internal rubber-wheel trolley shuttle routes:

- initial route to include circulation between the Marietta Conference Center, the Marietta Square, Kennestone Hospital, and Kennesaw Mountain
- secondary route to include circulation along South Loop to the Cobb Community Transit transfer center and along Fairground Street to Roswell Street and to Square

Aside from enhancing internal access, the shuttle routes would connect study area residents and visitors to other activity nodes and public transportation links.

To facilitate an internal circulator, the city should consider placement of parking decks near activity centers and along shuttle routes. Decks will also compensate for the reduction of on-site parking caused by the addition of streetscaping and landscaping along designated corridors. Parking decks should blend compatibly with their surroundings by concealing automobiles from visibility and having an outside deck façade that resembles a storied building.

To promote balanced transportation options, the city should continue implementation of the Kennesaw to Chattahoochee trail project and maintain continuity in paths and sidewalks between activity centers, surrounding neighborhoods, and green spaces.

Strategy 3: Neighborhoods

Action 3.1 Eliminate Incompatibilities

One of the most common threats to the health of urban neighborhoods is the incompatibility caused by surrounding commercial and industrial activities. The plan does not intend to eliminate non-residential uses from neighborhoods. The purpose of this strategy is to maintain the mix of land uses within the study area, but protect residential viability through compatible design. The plan recommends a special design overlay strategy in these areas to maintain the mixed use pattern, while promoting compatible new development.

Along with an emphasis on physical design, the city should articulate clear, proactive plans for its neighborhoods. The desired, predominate character of each area-whether residential, commercial/transitional or mixed use-must be reinforced through consistent development decision-making and regulatory actions. Uncertainty about the transitioning nature of central city neighborhoods may act to defer property maintenance or deter redevelopment.

The East Dixie Neighborhood

1. Amend the current Zoning Map to reduce existing light industrial designations in the area and expand available residential categories
2. Develop special design review overlay to ensure that new development complements existing development patterns. Development should follow basic guidelines, such as:
 - Roof forms should be predominantly sloped
 - Windows should be residential in style and configuration
 - New or landscape yards converted to courtyards are encouraged as places for outdoor activity
 - Maintain the traditional setbacks of buildings that reflect residential development patterns
 - Orient the front of the building to the street
 - Locate mechanical equipment and service areas out of public view
 - Building details that maintain the simple character of the area are encouraged; simple ornamental trim and decoration is appropriate
 - Consider using porches, eaves, corner boards and brackets as a part of the design of a new building
 - Locate parking away from the street frontage
 - Repeat use of building materials seen throughout the neighborhood

Washington Avenue/Lawrence Street

1. New office development should blend compatibly with surrounding historic structures
2. Develop special design review overlay to ensure that new development complements existing development patterns. Development should follow basic guidelines, such as:
 - Roof forms should be predominantly sloped
 - Windows should be residential in style and configuration
 - New or landscape yards converted to courtyards are encouraged as places for outdoor activity
 - Maintain the traditional setbacks of buildings that reflect residential development patterns
 - Orient the front of the building to the street
 - Locate mechanical equipment and service areas out of public view
 - Building details that maintain the simple character of the area are encouraged; simple ornamental trim and decoration is appropriate
 - Consider using porches, eaves, corner boards and brackets as a part of the design of a new building
 - Locate parking away from the street frontage
 - Repeat use of building materials seen throughout neighborhood

Action 3.2 Increase Green Space

A well-planned system of open areas ensures that residents have access to Squares, parks, and green spaces. Green space is an essential feature of healthy and attractive urban neighborhoods. They soften the landscape and give quiet, calm places to the downtown community. More than an aesthetic amenity, however, vegetation also cleans stormwater runoff, shades summer sun, and buffers neighborhoods from noise, traffic, and visual impacts.

According to community visioning and public input, Marietta residents want open space to offset increased development density in the study area. There are three main strategies for increasing the amount of open space. First, the city can reclaim green space through redevelopment. Design guidelines can encourage developers to provide open spaces, such as plazas or courtyards. The city can also add currently unused parcels to its open space inventory, including land along Roswell Street and Coryell Street. The Master Plan recommends that this parcel be used as a pocket park for surrounding neighborhoods. The plan also shows an opportunity to link available green spaces in the Victory Heights area west through the Fraiser neighborhood. Existing open spaces can also be connected in the West Dixie area north along the cemetery, as shown on the map. Any open space planning in the study area should be coordinated with existing and proposed city and county open space plans.



Forest Hills neighborhood gateway

Action 3.3 Create Neighborhood Gateways

Along with gateways for the overall downtown core, special entrances to areas within the community can highlight distinct neighborhoods. Each gateway should reflect the particular characteristics of its setting. Neighborhood-oriented entries can reflect the ethnic heritage of residents,

common architecture, and the historical background of the community. Forest Hills provides an excellent example of an attractive, small scale neighborhood gateway. The plan recommends that the city assist other downtown neighborhoods in establishing special entries. Appropriate gateways may include the Roosevelt Circle neighborhood entrance at Roosevelt Circle and Cole Street and the Fraiser neighborhood entry at Fairground Street and Fraiser Street.

Action 3.4 Strengthen Code Enforcement

As noted in the existing conditions section, the study area contains a disproportionate number of rental units. The study area should actively maintain a supply of affordable housing. The city, however, should also ensure that extensive absentee ownership does not contribute to deteriorated, substandard housing conditions. Limited resources limit the capacity of city staff to enforce existing code regulations. The plan recommends supplementing city efforts to protect the quality of rental housing through efforts to:

- Distribute information on landlord/tenant rights, responsibilities, and the viability of mediation services
- Form special multi-family and single-family rental housing associations
- Develop a volunteer neighborhoods committee with limited authority to encourage code enforcement through letter contacts of landlords and subsequent follow-up in local newspapers for persistent code violations

Action 3.5 Maintain the Internal Grid

One of the great assets of traditional urban neighborhoods is the grid system of streets, which provide convenient access and connectivity between neighborhoods. The plan recommends that the city maintain internal links by requiring new developments within the study area boundary to connect to the existing road system. This action would prohibit the layout of cul-de-sacs, exclusively gated communities, and suburban-style curvilinear streets in central city neighborhoods.

Action 3.6 Promote Home Ownership and Rehabilitation

1. Pursue available federal and state housing monies:

Housing and Urban Development's American Dream Downpayment Fund
For FY 2002, the administration in Washington, D.C. has proposed a number of new or expanded initiatives to improve homeownership rates among low-income and minority families and in central cities. The American Dream Downpayment Fund will provide \$200 million within the HOME program to match downpayment assistance provided by third parties. For every dollar provided by a third-party, the program will provide \$3, up to a maximum of \$1,500. Administered by state housing finance agencies, the program will leverage more than \$60 million in locally controlled funds and help more than 130,000 low-income families to overcome the downpayment obstacle and achieve homeownership.

As part of the Renewing the Dream Tax Credit, the administration will also propose a \$1.7 billion tax credit that will support the rehabilitation or new construction of an estimated 100,000 homes for purchase in low-income neighborhoods over a 5-year period. The program, which will subsidize up to

50 percent of project costs, will benefit low-income families living in predominantly distressed communities.

Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)

HOME provides formula grants that communities use-often in partnership with local nonprofit groups-to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership. HOME funds are awarded annually as formula grants to participating jurisdictions. Local governments may use HOME funds for grants, direct loans, loan guarantees or other forms of credit enhancement, or rental assistance or security deposits. Participating jurisdictions may choose among a broad range of eligible activities, including home purchase or rehabilitation financing assistance to eligible homeowners and new homebuyers; building or rehabilitating housing for rent or ownership; or for site acquisition or improvement, demolition of dilapidated housing to make way for HOME-assisted development, and payment of relocation expenses.

Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP)

The Community HOME Investment Partnerships Program (CHIP) sets aside a portion of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' HOME funds for local governments to develop or preserve affordable housing in their communities.

CHIP funds leverage private investment in housing including local lending institutions, private investors, and property owners. The program allocates monies to activities that produce, acquire, or rehabilitate housing units for income eligible homebuyers, homeowners, or tenants. CHIP funds can be used in conjunction with or separate from CDBG funds to finance housing strategies, focusing on the needs of low income families. CHIP funds can also facilitate the production or rehabilitation of single-family and rental housing through a combination of financing techniques including rehabilitation loans, "soft loans" and development subsidies, construction lending, loan guarantees, refinancing, and permanent mortgage financing.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) provides matching grant funds to assist a wide range of eligible activities, including housing improvement projects, public facilities such as water and sewer lines, buildings such as local health centers or head start centers, and economic development projects. All projects must substantially benefit low and moderate income persons.

HUD Self-Help Homeownership (SHOP) Program

SHOP encourages innovative homeownership opportunities through self-help housing where the homebuyer contributes a significant amount of sweat-equity toward the construction or rehabilitation of the dwelling. Dwellings developed under SHOP must be made available to eligible homebuyers at prices below the prevailing market prices. Eligible homebuyers are low-income families (families whose annual incomes do not exceed 80 percent of the median income for the area, as established by HUD) who are unable to purchase a dwelling. Housing assistance must involve community participation through the use of homebuyers and/or volunteers to construct dwellings.

Eligible activities are: (1) land acquisition (including financing and closing costs); (2) infrastructure improvements (installing, extending, constructing, rehabilitating, or otherwise improving utilities and other infrastructure, including removal of environmental hazards); and (3) administration, planning and management development not to exceed 20 percent of any SHOP grant. Funding of eligible activities may be used for both single-family and multifamily dwellings.

Single Family Home Buyer Program

The Home Buyer Program provides qualified first time home buyers in Georgia with low-interest rate loans that lower monthly house payments and ease the loan qualifying process. Home Buyer Program loans are funded from the sale of mortgage revenue bonds.

Stakeholder Quote:

“Community is where individuals from all economic levels and races feel comfortable.”

OwnHOME Program

OwnHOME Program loans are funded from a federal grant. These zero percent interest, deferred payment loans provide a portion of the down payment, closing costs, and prepaid fees. There are no monthly payments and borrowers need not repay the loan until they sell or refinance the loan.

2. Offer local property tax abatement or similar incentives for new owner purchased housing in the study area
3. Develop a strategy to target homeownership assistance to particular neighborhoods, thereby increasing impact; examples may include the Fraiser and Roosevelt Circle neighborhoods
4. Increase outreach to promote homeownership opportunities among households traditionally underrepresented in the private homeownership market, including low- and moderate- income households, legal immigrants, families with children, young adults, people with disabilities, and ethnic and racial minorities. An example may include a one-stop catalogue of home financing products, from both the public and private sectors, that are specially targeted to underserved populations and communities.

Action 3.7 Embrace Diversity

One of the great assets of central Marietta is its racial and ethnic diversity. The study area is home to long-standing African-American neighborhoods. The diversity continues to grow with the rapid increase of Latino residents. Healthy, vibrant communities welcome full participation from people of all backgrounds. To create an inclusive environment, the plan recommends that the city develop a collaborative relationship with organizations, such as the local chapters of the Latin American Association and the NAACP, that promote minority well being.

The city can further embrace diversity and invite minority involvement in community revitalization through efforts to:

- Explore investment and ownership opportunities for minority businesses
- Offer bilingual referrals to and assistance in accessing community resources
- Provide bilingual seminars on financial planning and the home-buying process
- Provide bilingual orientation on unemployment, wage and hour laws, discrimination, and workers' compensation
- Designate a safe and comfortable day laborer gathering area
- Increase the availability of and access to public transportation and activities for families and children
- Distribute information about bilingual service providers
- Identify community leaders in Latino and African-American areas and collaborate with them to educate the community and distribute information
- Ensure active minority representation on neighborhood-based volunteer committees

Action 3.8 Protect Historic Integrity

The historic character of Marietta neighborhoods creates a wonderful sense of place and a district identity. The city must protect these scarce resources. The plan recommends that the city actively promote the use of available tax credits to support the restoration of eligible historic structures. Examples may include seminars of home restoration and the publication of brochures that identify available tax benefits for homeowners.

Strategy 4: Organizational Strategies

Many of the Master Plan recommendations influence the physical structure of the study area. While attractive, compatible urban design is important, revitalization must also be supported by significant changes in organizational structure and decision-making.

The following strategy is based on the Main Street economic development approach, which follows 10 general principles^{viii}:

- widespread community support
- broad community representation
- a distinct constituency
- a well-defined vision and set of goals
- committed, dependable funding
- working committees

- full-time management
- a work program based on design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring
- a long-term commitment
- strong public-private partnerships

The actions below identify basic strategies to strengthen the community's position in physical design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring efforts.

Action 4.1 Enhance Downtown Design

The downtown's physical quality strongly influences peoples' decisions about where to shop, dine, and visit. The more that an area comes to resemble any place else, the less reason there is for people to be there. A downtown's design features—Squares, parks, public art, buildings, streets and alleyways—express community heritage and pride. Once demolition, neglect or incompatible surrounding development diminish these assets, the special character is lost. As discussed in earlier strategies, the Master Plan recommends streetscaping and design guideline overlays to protect the central city's distinctive design assets.

Action 4.2 Consolidate the Organization Process

The major challenge for central Marietta growth is a development structure that outside investors perceive as complex and fragmented. Cumbersome political processes are a particular hindrance in urban areas since suburban

land is often cheaper, available, and more readily accessed. The plan proposes two basic strategies to strengthen the development process:

- Consolidate primary responsibility for study area economic development in a professional, full-time downtown development coordinator position housed within the city
- Encourage close cooperation of downtown staff with Downtown Marietta Development Authority and other downtown business and cultural and tourism organizations

The idea is to create a seamless, streamlined, and responsive process that can facilitate growth. The director should act as a liaison between developers, regulatory authorities, and the community. As an example, the director can advocate for variances to development regulations, encourage additional developer provided amenities, and facilitate informational meetings between developers and neighborhood interests.

Action 4.3 Encourage Community Involvement

The Main Street development approach requires widespread community involvement. Active public participation increases support for strategy goals and stretches limited financial resources. The city should recruit a wide range of stakeholders to participate in revitalization activities, including bankers, property owners, merchants, downtown residents, chambers of commerce, civic groups, minority representatives, historic societies, schools, consumers, real estate agents, and the local media. The plan recommends four standing committees/task forces of volunteers to assist with ongoing plan implementation:

Promotion/Downtown Marketing

The purpose of the Promotion Committee is to market an image of downtown Marietta as center offering quality business, entertainment, housing, shopping, and tourism opportunities. Functions may include:

- directing retail promotions and traffic-building activity for the downtown
- monitoring consumer perceptions of downtown
- coordinating promotional activities
- developing a close relationship with local media

Economic Restructuring

This committee assumes responsibility for improving the retail mix, strengthening the tax base, and increasing investor interest in downtown. Functions may include:

- recruiting additional businesses
- developing a package of financial incentives to attract investment
- developing a relationship with local financial institutions
- maintaining an inventory of downtown businesses

Neighborhood/Corridor Advocacy

These committees represent various sub-areas of the central city community (areas may include Powder Springs Road, Roswell Street, the Roosevelt Circle neighborhood, Fraiser neighborhood). Functions may include:

- encouraging enforcement of housing code regulations

- monitoring traffic or other conditions that may affect neighborhood quality of life
- identifying opportunities to beautify neighborhoods through signs, open spaces, or design amenities
- promoting awareness of neighborhood issues
- overseeing special design or development projects in the neighborhoods

Tourism/Cultural

This committee focuses on tourism and related cultural activities. Functions may include:

- identifying opportunities to increase tourism
- developing promotional materials
- assisting in organizing cultural/tourism events

Action 4.4 Enhance Downtown Promotion

Many downtowns suffer from a cycle of decline. Consumer and investor interest fade, business decreases, rents and property values fall, and the city's tax base shrinks. With the continued flight of investment, buildings and public spaces eventually deteriorate. Active promotion improves overall image by changing community attitudes, creating a coordinated identity, and expanding perceptions of downtown opportunities.

Activities should focus on retail promotions, special events, and image building. Marietta already sponsors a number of special activities in the

Square, including the Glover Park Concert Series, holiday celebrations, the Taste of Marietta Festival, and art and antiques displays.

The plan recommends that the city enhance its current promotional activities through efforts to:

- Widely distribute a free brochure that lists available retail services and restaurants, entertainment options, and scheduled activities in the downtown
- Publish a parking brochure that identifies the location of meters, lots, and decks
- Sponsor a tour of homes and lofts to generate interest in downtown living
- Develop a wayfinding system for a heritage walk that highlights community history in the downtown
- Develop a specific logo and other branding images for downtown Marietta
- Develop a specific position statement that identifies market groups to be targeted by promotions—families, young professionals, students, and downtown workers

Action 4.5 Restructure the Downtown Economy

Currently, the study area economy is unbalanced with a disproportionate number of auto-related services and specialty retail boutiques. According to public input and community visioning, Marietta residents want a mix of retail services, including more restaurants, upscale clothing stores, coffee shops, book stores, and grocery stores. Study area demographics, however, do not

support a broader or more upscale commercial base. Design and promotional based strategies are intended to increase the attractiveness of residential options. This strategy provides a complementary approach by expanding the downtown retail and service mix and boosting overall market effectiveness.

The plan recommends an economic repositioning of the downtown market by:

1. Recruit selected new businesses, particularly grocery and drug stores, that may successfully fill a market niche in the study area
2. Inventory underused or vacant buildings and shopping centers and identify new or better uses for these buildings
3. Explore use of available monies to support downtown revitalization, such as the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DD RLF) and the twenty percent (20%) investment tax credit (ITC)
 - The Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DD RLF) provides assistance for downtown development projects that cannot be undertaken with existing public sector grant and loan programs. Eligible applicants generally have downtown commercial areas with a significant number of commercial structures that are at least 50 years old; a high percentage of empty storefronts or evidence of an immediate threat to downtown commercial viability; a market analysis identifying the activities that the downtown could support; a plan for attracting or retaining businesses; and the commitment of private/public funding to support downtown development activities. Funds may be used for real estate acquisition, clearance, development, redevelopment, and construction, and the reconstruction or rehabilitation of public and private infrastructure and facilities.
 - The twenty percent (20%) investment tax credit (ITC) encourages the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings for business purposes. The

tax credit provides a dollar for dollar reduction of federal income taxes for eligible equity investors. The building must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing building within a historic district. The project must meet the “substantial rehabilitation test,” and common-sense guidelines for appropriate and sensitive rehabilitation.

4. Develop appropriate local granted financial incentives to attract investment, including low interest loan pools, reduced development fees, publicly funded infrastructure or site improvements, predevelopment grants and loans to explore project feasibility, and special technical or funding assistance for demonstration projects that meet design overlay guidelines in overlay districts

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- ⁱ Guidelines are based on City of Atlanta Neighborhood Commercial Guidelines, the Mall of Georgia Design Guidelines, Gwinnett County, Georgia, and Downtown Core Commercial and Mixed Use Standards, Davis, CA
- ⁱⁱ Have It Your Way: Fast-Food Restaurant Design By Edward T. McMahon, Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 20, Fall 1995
- ⁱⁱⁱ An Introduction to Design Guidelines by Ilene Watson, Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 41, Winter 2001.
- ^{iv} Gateways: Creating a Civic Identity by Suzanne Sutro Rhees, Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 21, Winter 1996.
- ^v City Comforts: How to Build An Urban Village by David Sucher, 1995
- ^{vi} Access Management: An Overview by Elizabeth Humstone & Julie Campoli
- ^{vii} Centering Our Suburbs by Richard Untermann, Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 22, Spring, 1996.
- ^{viii} Revitalizing Downtown: The Professional's Guide to the Main Street Approach, Main Street National Trust

IMPLEMENTATION

Successful plans facilitate implementation. For an increased probability of success, several items are needed: political will, public support, organization and funding. The extensive public participation process of Envision Marietta has helped to achieve some political and public support. The Atlanta Regional Commission has committed to providing some funding for implementation of plan elements. Their expressed desire is for public infrastructure investments to spur private investment within town cores. The Envision Marietta plan outlines very specific strategies for achieving this goal. Following is the action plan to implement the outlined strategies. First, the plan lists a 5-year schedule of local actions planned to implement study goals with an estimated start date, completion date and responsible party. Some of the action plan items are scheduled for the entire 5-year process since they are envisioned as on-going processes. Next, will be a 5-year prioritized description of transportation improvement projects with preliminary budget estimates. Strategies for funding scheduled improvements will be outlined to supplement the potential funding from the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Center Initiatives program. Lastly, a list of potential changes necessary to the City of Marietta's Comprehensive Plan to implement the plan goals will be highlighted.

**Implement a Five-Year Schedule of Local Actions
to Realize Study Goals**

Action	Start Date	Complete Date	Responsible Party
1. Write and approve Commercial Design Overlay Districts for Roswell Street, Fairground St., Loop, and Powder Springs Road	12/01	12/03	Planning and Zoning Department
2. Write and approve new zoning guidelines for “activity centers”	12/01	12/03	Planning and Zoning Department
3. Initiate and approve rezonings in East Dixie neighborhood	01/02	01/05	Planning and Zoning Department
4. Initiate a new “residential urban infill” zoning category	06/02	07/02	Planning and Zoning Department
5. Write and approve new design guidelines in West Dixie and Washington/Lawrence neighborhoods	12/01	12/03	Planning and Zoning Department
6. Create neighborhood gateways	12/01	07/06	Planning and Zoning Department
7. Implement strategies for stricter code enforcement	12/01	12/06	Code Enforcement

Action	Start Date	Complete Date	Responsible Party
8. Continue CDBG loans for home ownership and rehabilitation	12/01	12/06	Community Development Dept.
9. Promote use of tax credits to support historic home restoration	12/02	07/06	Planning and Zoning Department
10. Hire Economic Development Professional	02/02	08/02	City Manager
11. Create volunteer standing committees	12/01	12/06	Economic Development Professional

Implement a Five-Year Schedule of Prioritized Transportation Projects/Programs

Project/Program	Est. Construction Cost/Program Year
1. Roswell St. Corridor Streetscape	\$4,000,000 (2003)
1. East/West Alternatives Traffic Study	\$ 200,000 (2003)
2. Atlanta St. Corridor Streetscape	\$2,000,000 (2003)
3. Complete Kennessaw to Chattahoochee multi-use trail	\$1,500,000 (2005)
4. CCT subsidy for government employees	\$500,000 (2002)
5. Shuttle circulator	See Table

Project/Program	Est. Construction Cost/Program Year
8. Fairground Street Streetscape	\$1,900,000 (2003)
9. Powder Springs Road Streetscape (in study area)	\$1,800,000 (2004)
11. Loop Corridor Streetscape	\$2,000,000 (2005)
12. Powder Springs Road Streetscape- outside study area	\$4,400,000 (2005)
13. Link proposed pedestrian crossing over North Loop to walkway along rail line through urban design elements	\$500,000 (2006)
14. Grade elevate a pedestrian crossing at Mill Street or Depot Street	\$500,000 (2006)
15. Cobb Parkway Corridor Streetscape	\$3,600,000 (2006)

Note: Construction cost estimates do not include right-of-way land cost estimates.

SHUTTLE CIRCULATORS

The table provides costs estimates for potential shuttle circulators financed by CCT versus a private provider. Most Transportation Management Associations are currently using private turnkey providers. The benefit of the turnkey provider is that the local jurisdiction or TMA incurs no capital costs for bus purchase. The table also lists some capital costs for electric vehicles and recharging stations. The City could explore these options with the Marietta Power Company.

Shuttle circulators provide a short term and long term benefit. The short-term benefit is that it is a travel demand strategy that can be more easily implemented. The long-term benefit is that it provides the public with more convenient transit options. This convenience factor could increase the amount of individuals using transit, thereby providing a ready ridership for any future potential light rail and/or heavy rail alternatives implemented in the area.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS/PROGRAMS

The proposed transportation improvements listed above, including pedestrian/bicycle improvements, traffic signal improvements and east/west traffic improvements, will not hinder or impede the implementation of any plans and programs currently being studied. As mentioned previously, shuttle circulators actually encourage transit so that future rail alternatives would be more successful in terms of ridership. Pedestrian improvements will facilitate access to transit in whatever ultimate form it is implemented in the City of Marietta. The strategies listed above will add to the efficiency of any improvements currently being considered by the Marietta to Lawrenceville study as well as the Town Center/Cumberland CID light rail study. Established City of Marietta priorities can be an input to future studies such as the Northern Sub-Area Study and the Arts Center to Cumberland study.

FUNDING ALTERNATIVES

As previously mentioned, the Atlanta Regional Commission has set aside over \$350 million for project implementation within Livable Center Communities throughout a 5-year period. The City of Marietta has already applied for funding of the Roswell Street Streetscape in the amount of \$4 million. LCI approval of funding is scheduled to occur this summer. Nevertheless, given the expensiveness of the projects and the competition for Livable Center Initiative funds, the City must explore other funding alternatives in order to accomplish the goals set out in the Envision Marietta plan.

Other funding mechanisms include:

1. Atlanta Regional Commission funds not set aside for Livable Center Communities. For example, the City can apply for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Funds (CMAQ) or Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds to implement some of the above-named projects. These are two funding categories that the City can compete for funds on a regular basis to implement sidewalk, streetscape, multi-use trail and other transportation type projects.
2. Transportation Enhancement Funds (TEA). The Georgia Department of Transportation awards these funds on a yearly basis to implement the types of projects recommended in the Envision Marietta Plan.
3. Other grant programs to build multi-use trails, such as Urban Resources Partnership Grants, Greenway implementation dollars from the Governor's Greenspace Program or the National Park Service Trails Program, all could be tapped to expedite construction of the prioritized list of projects.
4. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Infrastructure projects within areas eligible for CDBG funds, coupled with other

housing and land use initiatives outlined in the plan, can be used for the prioritized projects.

5. Create an off-street parking authority. This type of authority can issue bonds to build parking lots and then manage the metered lots and other metered parking throughout the City. Revenue received from the parking fees would be used to pay off the bonds.
6. The State Historic Preservation Office has tax credit programs for rehabilitation of commercial buildings/facades and residential structures.
7. Taking advantage of the new amendments to the Tax Allocation District regulations whereby the definition of areas eligible for establishing TAD's has been expanded.
8. Negotiate with Marietta Power to provide electric vehicles in the downtown square area to enhance circulation.
9. Create a Transportation Management Association with start up funds from the Atlanta Regional Commission. The Downtown Square businesses and surrounding areas could establish a TMA that may potentially fund a service such as shuttles/trolleys. Space on the trolley could be used to advertise downtown businesses, free coupons to downtown business could be distributed and other such marketing strategies could be implemented. Collaborating with the Cumberland and Town Center TMA programs would maximize efforts of the Marietta Square area TMA.

The City of Marietta is scheduled to update their Comprehensive Plan in 2001. Included in this effort will be the following changes proposed to implement the study area goals:

1. Study area goals call for the development of new land use categories for residential infill and mixed uses. These categories would need to be defined, adopted and located within the updated comprehensive plan.
2. Study area goals call for an increase in the allowable residential density of areas adjacent to the Marietta Square.

3. Study area goals call for the addition of a mixed-use category to areas adjacent to the CBD South proposed Activity Center.
4. To eliminate incompatibilities, the plan recommends amending the Comprehensive Plan and zoning map to reduce the existing light industrial designations and expand available residential categories in the East Dixie neighborhood.
5. The Economic Development element of the Comprehensive Plan would need to be updated to include recommendations for a new Executive Director and economic development committees. The proposed Design Committee could be responsible for implementation of the Overlay Design guidelines established within the study area.